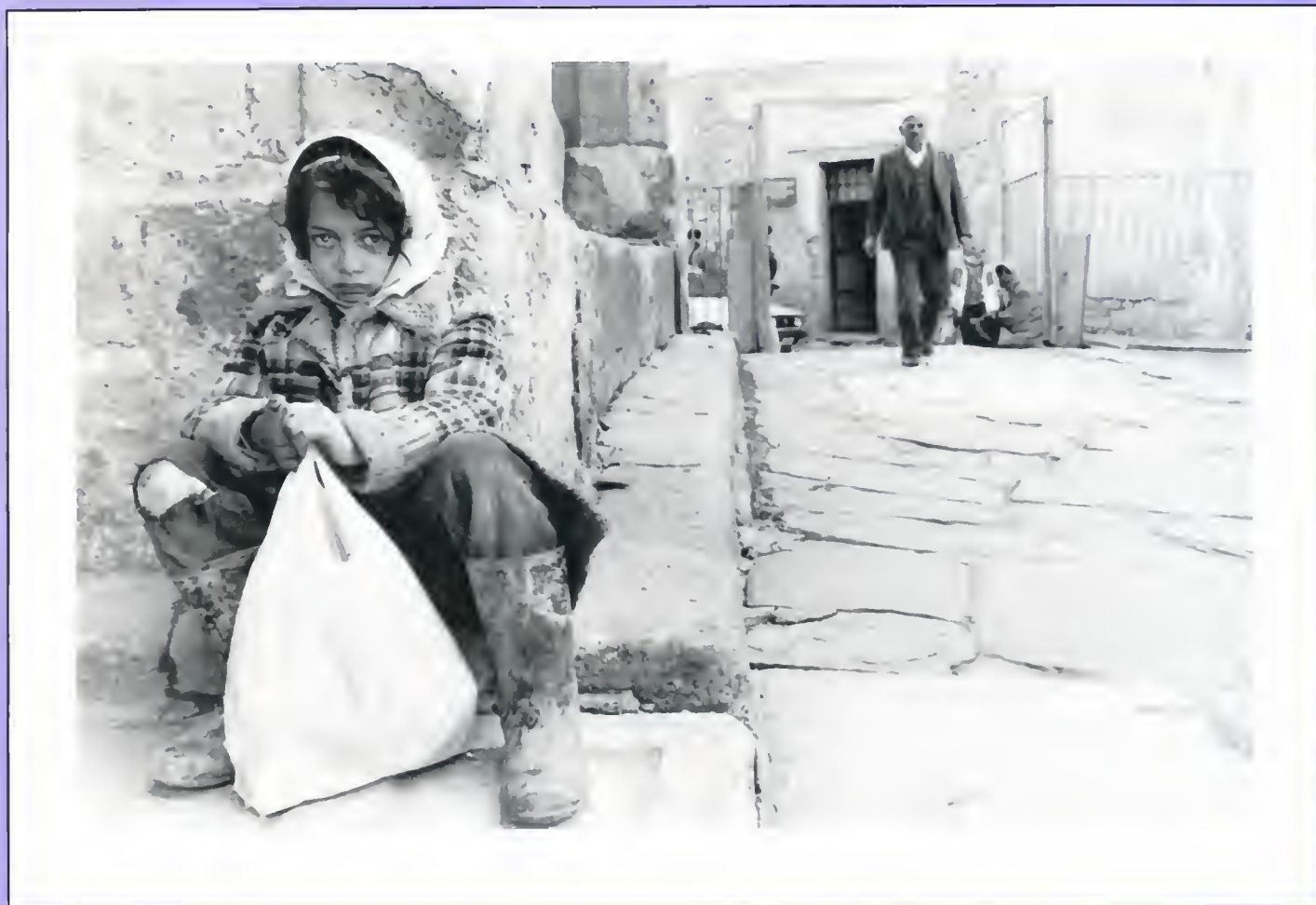


# CovertAction

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# CovertAction / covert action

In 1993, *CovertAction* enters its 15th year of publication. The most striking phenomenon in this decade and a half of enormous change was the end of the Soviet Union as a superpower. If the Cold Warriors had been correct—that the driving force of U.S. policy was overcoming Communism—the dissolution of the USSR should have precipitated a radical change in U.S. policy. On the contrary, however, the rapaciousness of the U.S., both economically and militarily, has continued unabated. The invasions of Panama and Iraq, the attempts to control world trade through the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the manipulations of the U.N., the movement of troops under U.S. control into Somalia, all bear witness to business as usual.

Unaltered by the effective end of the Cold War is the consistent underlying goal of U.S. policy: controlling as much of the world as possible, extracting its wealth, and harnessing it to U.S. interests. In the wake of U.S. dominance, the ranks of Third World poor have increased by 40 percent over the last 20 years, and many in the Second World, the former Soviet sphere of influence, are descending into war, fascism, and poverty.

The fundamental U.S. policy tool for winning economic and strategic advantage remains, as before, covert action. By this term we do not mean only the netherworld of spy vs. spy. Rather, we include all those actions of government which take place behind a screen of disinformation,

misinformation, deception, lies, and manipulations. Routine covert actions practiced by the government include direct and indirect press censorship; the complex bureaucratic machinations which hide policies and/or policy objectives; regulatory agencies that allow polluters to reap profit from poisoning people and the environment; shrouded support for countries that violate the human and civil rights of their people.

The term covert action includes all the ways in which government operates quietly to confuse the public; to disguise greed and malfeasance; to reinforce the advantages that come with being white and male; to attack the wrong people and the wrong causes for crime or drug abuse; to protect and enrich the wealthy; to subvert self-determination.

Nor is covert action the exclusive turf of government. Behind a shield of privilege, corporations circumvent existing regulations that are supposed to protect the health and safety of workers and the public. Using campaign contributions, public relations efforts, and lobbying, they often overstep the boundaries of "responsible corporate citizenship" and quietly trample fundamental democratic institutions and values.

When government and corporations operate in any way other than openly and democratically, without the full, informed consent of the populace, we deem that a covert action.

We have, you may note, changed the name of the magazine to *CovertAction Quarterly*. We have not, however, changed our commitment to cutting-edge investigative journalism and in-depth analysis. After 15 years, the agenda of this magazine—exposing and challenging covert operations—has grown more encompassing and uncompromising. Just as the ending of the Cold War did not end the exploitative nature of relations between weak and strong nations, it has not ended the unjust power relations at home or the ways in which this anti-democratic inequity is preserved and disguised. Covert operations are inherently elitist, subverting the will and power of the majority.

Throughout the next year we will be celebrating this anniversary while at the same time lamenting that there is still so much need for *CovertAction*, the magazine, to expose and attack covert action, the operative core of the U.S. system.

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# Zimbabwe's Poisoned Legacy: Secret War in Southern Africa

Jeremy Brickhill

*From government-approved death squads, to "black-on-black" violence, from psychological warfare to ethnic engineering, from poison warfare and assassination to the undermining of reconciliation and development, Rhodesia—with the connivance of Western powers—passed to South Africa its techniques and practitioners of counterinsurgency, racism, and terror.*

The war of national liberation in Zimbabwe (1960-79) has spawned a plethora of "good old boy" military histories of the battles waged by Ian Smith's white minority regime against African Nationalist guerrillas.<sup>1</sup> These tales of helicopter heroics and "fire-force" commando raids have, however, added surprisingly little to our understanding of the real impact and strategic development of counterinsurgency—and more recently "contra-type" insurgency—in Southern Africa in the past two decades.

Although the regimes responsible for these wars in defense of minority rule have now fallen, or are on their last legs, their counterinsurgency strategies and tactics have left deep scars of as yet unresolved conflict.<sup>2</sup> Today the bitter legacies of "war by stealth" continue to undermine develop-

ment and destabilize communities throughout the region. In South Africa itself, extreme right-wing forces in the military-intelligence establishment have attempted to utilize the destabilizing capacity of "secret war" in a campaign of destruction.

Many of the themes of secret war—"contra-type" armies, psychological war, poison war and so-called "black-on-black" violence—which today continue to take their toll in the region were first developed in Rhodesia. The story of this legacy is still largely untold and shrouded in secrecy.<sup>3</sup>

The history is also unfinished. South Africa, last bastion of the white dream of apartheid Africa, is now refuge to the very men who tried and failed to perpetuate minority rule in other countries. Many of the warriors and strategists involved in the conduct and development of Rhodesia's secret war moved on to serve South Africa after Zimbabwean independence, and took their secrets with them. A deadly code of silence binds these practitioners of the sinister arts of war—a code which is only broken when new employers offer new contracts. A handful, however, are beginning to speak, albeit in great fear, and slowly the history of our past decades of conflict is being rewritten.

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Jeremy Brickhill is a Zimbabwean writer, filmmaker and activist. He joined the guerrilla forces in his country's war of liberation, and has written widely about the liberation struggles of Southern Africa. In 1987, he was severely injured in a car bomb attack by a South African Military Intelligence "hit squad" in Zimbabwe. A documentary film, *The Hidden Hand*, following his quest to uncover the forces behind secret wars and assassinations in the region, was shown by Britain's Channel Four Television in November 1991. His books include *Whirlwind Before the Storm*, a major study (with Alan Brooks) of the Soweto uprising. He is currently completing a doctoral study of guerrilla war at Oxford University. Secretary of the Mafela Trust, an organization of former guerrillas which seeks to address the legacies of conflict in Zimbabwe, he is also a member of the OXFAM(UK) Trustees Africa Advisory Committee.

1. See Peter Stiff and Ron Reid-Daly, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago Press, 1982). Former University of Zimbabwe War Studies lecturer Major Mike Evans writes that "Stiff and Reid Daly and Cole have in fact unconsciously created a new genre—the Southern—which like the Western eulogizes the frontier legend, reducing complex political conflicts and racial confrontations to the barest hagiographic simplicities.... It is impossible to accept this as credible military history." (Henrik Ellert, *Rhodesia Front War* ((Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1989)), foreword.)

2. Former CIO officer Henrik Ellert writes in the preface to his useful account of Rhodesian counterinsurgency, *Rhodesia Front War*, that studying Rhodesia's secret war, is "of importance in understanding the changing pattern of military

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intervention and destabilization in the sub-continent. Many events in South Africa since 1980 have direct links with [my] story." *Op. cit.*, p. viii.

3. Such credible studies as have been written on the Rhodesian military legacy largely avoid the secret war and deal instead with tactical innovation, such as the use of "Fireforce"—helicopter-borne infantry, and counterinsurgency debates on "mobile counter-offensive" or "area defence" strategies. See J.K. Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia* (Kent: Croom Helm, 1985). Rhodesian military commanders write too, particularly in South African military journals, but do little more than extol the virtues of "gloves off" military action. See R. Reid-Daly, "War in Rhodesia—Cross-Border Operations" in A.J. Venter (ed.), *Challenge: Southern Africa Within the African Revolutionary Context* (Gibraltar: Ashanti, 1989).



## The Secret War Against the Nationalist Movement.

In the late 1950s, the African Nationalist movement in Southern Rhodesia was growing in size and militancy. The white minority government responded with increasing repression — detentions, bannings and arrests — but failed to halt the rising tide of resistance. By the early 1960s, the demand for majority rule precipitated a profound political crisis within the Rhodesian government. At the same time, however, the nationalist ranks fell prey to bitter internecine conflict and, in 1963, split into two factions: ZANU and ZAPU. The white minority regime was then able to consolidate its hold on the country and establish the military and intelligence framework with which it could wage war against the nationalist movement.

There has never been any reliable evidence of the role of the Rhodesian government, or any of its agencies, in fomenting the original split. Nationalist leaders, however, have claimed that the U.S. CIA was directly involved in the disputes which led up to the division. They charge that Ndabaningi Sithole, the first leader of the dissident faction, ZANU, had been recruited by the CIA in 1960, and was thereafter used to exacerbate the tensions which ultimately created the rift.<sup>4</sup>

It was at this very moment that the Southern Rhodesian government was setting up its own intelligence agency—the Central Intelligence Organization—under the leadership of Ken Flower. From its inception, the CIO was at the very center of the secret war and ran almost continuous operations aimed at fomenting and exacerbating tensions within the nationalist movement.

The CIO's predecessor, the police Special Branch, had worked hard to penetrate the nationalist movement and, according to Flower, this surreptitious access was used by the CIO to weaken the movement from within. In his mis-

4. Interview with George Nyandoro, September 19, 1990, Harare. A series of splits in African Nationalist ranks throughout the region took place in the early 1960s (PAC from ANC in South Africa, ZANU from ZAPU in Southern Rhodesia, COREMO from FRELIMO in Mozambique, FNLA from MPLA in Angola) and mainstream nationalists at the time alleged the CIA was involved in fomenting these divisions. Ndabaningi Sithole himself was soon expelled from his own splinter party, and in recent years has made no secret of his close relations with official U.S. circles.

chievous and misleading autobiography, Flower, who headed the CIO from 1964 to 1981, wrote that "in order to preserve our advantageous position...the CIO conducted the first stage of the conflict as a 'silent war.'" Working secretly through its network of agents, Flower relates how "the split that had occurred in the nationalist movement in 1963, leading to the formation of ZANU in opposition to Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU, was perpetuated by the CIO."<sup>5</sup>

During these early days, the foundations were laid for many deep and bitter divisions in nationalist ranks. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the malevolent hand of the CIO was evident in the series of assassinations, provocations, massacres and rebellions which plagued the movement. Advocates of nationalist unity were assassinated, sectarian firebrands secretly supported, and CIO provocations led to further conflict and division.

The CIO, according to Flower, paid particular attention to fomenting "tribalism and nepotism" to create further splits within the nationalist movement.<sup>6</sup>

As the struggle against African Nationalism developed into a full-scale war against nationalist guerrillas, the CIO's manipulation of internal tensions in the nationalist movement became increasingly bloody. When



Ministry of Information

Training Rhodesian "District Security Assistants" in counterinsurgency.

the nationalist movement continued to gain ground and win popular support, the CIO responded by extending the boundaries of the secret war still further.

Today, although Ken Flower is dead and Rhodesia has disappeared from the atlas, the detritus of this silent war has not only migrated with its practitioners to neighboring countries, but lingers on in Zimbabwe itself. Rivalries and hostility—even armed conflicts—which have plagued independent Zimbabwe and weakened development programs, can be traced back to the pre-independence schemes of the CIO.

But it was in the early years of Zimbabwe's independence, after the war against the Rhodesian regime was over, that the seeds of division planted by Rhodesia's secret war against nationalism finally yielded their bitter harvest. An estimated 5,000 unarmed rural people were killed in the five year conflict as Zimbabwe tottered on the brink of civil war

5. Ken Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record, Rhodesia Into Zimbabwe 1964 to 1981* (London: John Murray, 1987), p. 104.

6. *Ibid.*



Former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith shares a joke with Special Air Service officers during their last official dinner.

between the two main liberation forces, ZAPU and ZANU. The Pretoria regime played a key role in orchestrating this conflict as part of its destabilization campaign against Zimbabwe but the origins of the conflict lay in an intelligence operation whose government has ceased to exist. Today, unresolved disputes created by the CIO between nationalist leaders have developed into regional and tribal animosities between former allies and, decades after the liberation war, are drawing new generations into conflict.

#### **"Pseudo-operations" and Psychological Warfare**

In the early 1970s, nationalist guerrillas made their first major territorial advances inside Rhodesia. They won popular peasant support, created rural bases, and established control over popular zones. When intelligence information to the Rhodesian forces from these areas ceased, the CIO and the Rhodesian Army created the secret Selous Scouts which, disguised as guerrillas, operated behind guerrilla lines.

Initially, this Special Forces "pseudo" unit worked within rural areas in an intelligence gathering and reconnaissance capacity. Within a short time, however, the Scouts evolved into the executive arm of the CIO's secret war.

"The Scouts operated with the simple credo that the ends justify the means," wrote former CIO officer Henrik Ellert; "and shrouded in secrecy, the unit developed a sinister reputation and to this day most of their war-time exploits remain secret."<sup>7</sup>

7. Ellert, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

The black and white soldiers of the Selous Scouts, led by white officers, were under the command and control of CIO Special Branch Liaison Officers. Operating within the guerrilla-controlled zones, the Scouts attempted to infiltrate the rural population in a manner similar to that of the real guerrillas.

Their *modus operandi* required a constant supply of captured insurgents who could authenticate the Scouts to the local population. The technique of "turning" captured guerrillas developed by the Scouts began with a simple option: death or acceptance. Those who accepted recruitment were led into the surreal world of a unit which clearly operated outside any external restraint. Kill bonuses of \$1,000 added to the incentive of staying alive.<sup>8</sup>

Utilizing the "captures" to lead their units into guerrilla zones, the Scouts set about destroying the guerrilla infrastructure, making little distinction between military and civilian personnel. They identified and killed guerrilla contact people, led guerrilla units into ambushes, and eliminated compromised villages. Often these killings were carried out in the name of the insurgency itself, creating further divisions and tensions within the population.

A Selous Scout unit might, for example, publicly execute villagers known to support the guerrillas. The Scouts, disguised as guerrillas, would assemble the villagers and accuse a devoted nationalist sympathizer of being a "sellout." He or she would then be brutally murdered as an example, leaving the villagers terrorized and terrified. When real guerrillas

arrived, they would be met by fear, anger, or suspicion. Further killings might well result, this time at the hands of genuine guerrillas, convinced that the villagers were now working for the Rhodesian forces. In the

same manner, Selous Scout units lured guerrilla units into ambushes, creating tensions and conflicts within the guerrilla command. The intention of these operations was to destabilize both the guerrilla forces and the civilian population on whom they depended.

These Selous Scout operations were supported by a variety of further destabilizing measures. CIO Special Branches passed booby-trapped radios fitted with triple-switch delay mechanisms to its agents in rural areas for onward transmission to guerrillas. It was a win-win tactic. "The exploding radios and record players did work on a number of oc-

8. Ellert, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

casions," Ellert wrote, "...more often than not ordinary civilians suffered."<sup>9</sup> But even when no guerrillas were killed by the trick devices, the terrorizing impact on peasant villages still served the purpose of creating fear and division.

Acting on CIO instructions, the Selous Scouts also carried out targeted assassinations and kidnapping on Nationalist politicians operating legally within the country. Such targets simply disappeared or were killed in such a manner that the guerrillas appeared responsible.

In the rural areas where the Scouts largely operated, regular Rhodesian forces were frozen out and the Scouts did as they wished, adding murder, rape, smuggling, and poaching to their military duties.<sup>10</sup> As brutality became routine, it carried over into their private lives, too. CIO chief Flower himself concedes that the unit attracted "psychopathic killers" and "vainglorious extroverts" who operated outside any effective military discipline.<sup>11</sup> The victims of this reign of terror were mostly simple peasant farmers caught up in an ever growing circle of indiscriminate violence.

### Psychological Warfare Operations

Psychological warfare (PsyOps) teams also played their part in the destabilization and traumatization of the rural population. Although most PsyOps campaigns launched by Rhodesian forces failed dismally—particularly where they sought to directly win peasant support for the government—a variety of destabilizing measures were effective. In particular, the simple withholding of food from rural areas, in the cynically named Operation Turkey, created widespread suffering, trauma, and tension in war-ravaged communities.

The Rhodesian PsyOps teams also attempted to recruit traditional *spirit mediums* and healers, and used traditional religious beliefs to create fear and insecurity. In the Southern African rural cosmology, the hyena is seen as the sinister and evil tool of sorcery, harbinger of death, and nighttime transporter of witches and wizards. PsyOps

teams therefore broadcast amplified recordings of laughing hyenas and roaring lions to terrorize villagers before or after military operations.<sup>12</sup> "It put the fear of Christ up them," boasted Rhodesian Intelligence Corps member Bob North.<sup>13</sup>

These bizarre and evil campaigns were only a part of the assault on rural people. A far more sinister and secretive aspect of this covert war is only now coming to light, with implications of far greater significance for the international community.

### The Poison War

In the mid-1970s, in the most closely guarded secret operation of the entire war, the CIO embarked on a program of chemical and biological warfare. Doctors and chemists from the University of (then-)Rhodesia were recruited by the CIO and asked to identify and test a range of chemical and biological agents which could be used in the war against the nationalist guerrillas.<sup>14</sup>

12. Cilliers, *op. cit.*, p. 167. Cilliers notes that Rhodesian PsyOps teams actually knew too little about African beliefs to effectively pursue their crazy plans, and comments that their approach was itself "a product of the racial preconceptions of white Rhodesians in general." Nevertheless, the overall effect was to create further confusion and fear in rural communities.

13. Julie Frederiske, *None But Ourselves* (N.Y.: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 131.

14. The only reliable published evidence of the material which follows has been provided by former CIO officer Henrik Ellert. His book, *Rhodesia Front War*, contains the only detailed account of the poison war. In his book *Serving Secretly*, Ken Flower, the Rhodesian CIO chief, briefly concedes that such events took place. Flower is now dead. I interviewed Ellert in 1991 and obtained further information from him. The same year, I interviewed a number of former CIO and South African security service personnel, from whose accounts the material which follows is drawn. With the exception of Ellert, all these interviews were conducted on a confidential basis.



Ross Baughmann

Rhodesian soldier interrogates prisoners who were kept in this position for over an hour.

9. Ellert, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

10. Ellert, *op. cit.*, Chapter 5. Ellert recounts various incidents which provide a sense of the "free for all" atmosphere in which the Scouts operated.

11. Flower, *op. cit.*, p. 124.



Camera Press

White children in Rhodesia watch a demonstration.

Anatomy professor Robert Symington,<sup>15</sup> who headed the clinical program, recruited several medical students and colleagues to work on the research. By 1975, following laboratory testing, they were ready for clinical trials on human "guinea-pigs."

A remote Selous Scout camp at Mount Darwin in north-eastern Rhodesia was the chosen site. The CIO provided the victims from their detention centers, choosing little known detainees who had been arrested on various security charges. In the secrecy of this camp, the doctors administered various chemical and biological agents to the prisoners, experimenting with delivery systems and dose levels. The local CIO Special Branch disposed of the bodies in local mine shafts.

By 1976, the CIO Special Branch and the Selous Scouts were ready to implement the program headed by CIO Terrorist Desk Chief, Inspector Dave Anderton.

The Scouts would carry out the actual deployment of the successfully tested chemical and biological weapons into target areas. Their knowledge of guerrilla operating methods and their role as pseudo-guerrillas gave them unique access in rural communities. They were assisted

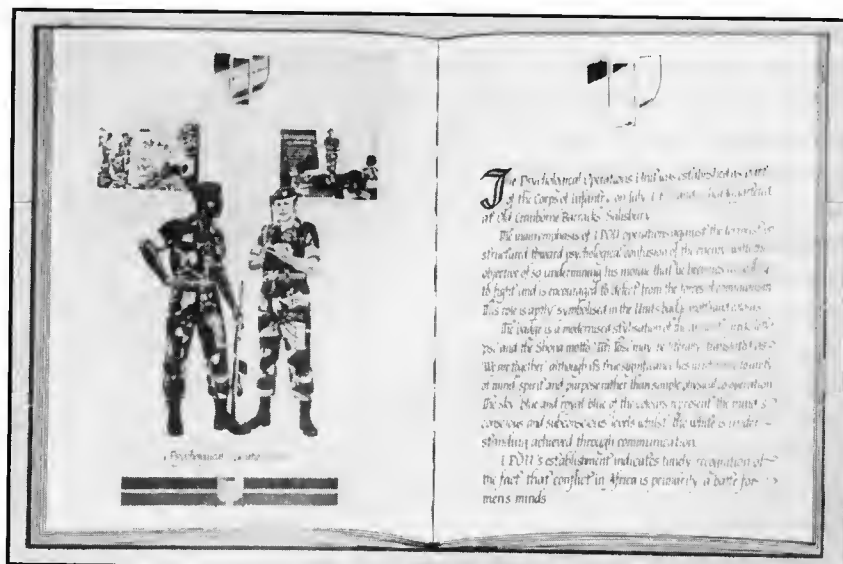
15. Professor Symington moved to South Africa after Zimbabwean independence, and is alleged by his former colleagues to have collaborated with a top-secret South African program (code-named "Red Mountain") to develop chemical and biological weapons in that country.

by the Special Branch network of informers and agents and by South African military and security personnel who not only acted as advisers and monitors, but likely had played some part in the development of the CB agents.

The chemical and biological agents which the CIO deployed or tested in the field included:

- **organophosphate poisons** impregnated in clothing—particularly underwear—which are absorbed through the pores of the skin, especially during strenuous exercise. Death takes place after several hours, or sometimes days, of serious illness.
- **thallium**, a heavy metal and slow acting nerve poison, was introduced into food, drink and medical products. As with the poisoned clothing, the victims were frequently civilians.
- **Warfarin**, a rat poison to contaminate food and drink.
- **"bacteriological agents"** as yet unidentified which were used to contaminate boreholes, rivers, and other water sources. There are several cases of deaths attributed to drinking water and Henrik Ellert recounts one incident in which the Ruya River was infected with an unidentified biological agent in 1976. This incident corresponds with a cholera epidemic along the Ruya River in Mozambique in which fatalities were reported. In Mozambique, the water supply of the town of Cochemane was poisoned by Selous Scouts. The CIO later reported 200 deaths in Cochemane attributed again to cholera.<sup>16</sup>
- **anthrax bacterium** which was introduced into rural areas of Western Zimbabwe, resulting in several hundred human deaths. [See following article for a full discussion of anthrax and the implications of biological warfare in Zimbabwe.]

16. Ellert, *op. cit.*, p. 112.



Uniforms of the Rhodesian Army, Salisbury Press, 1974



Undoubtedly, a wide range of toxic agents was developed and deployed by the CIO and many thousands of people died. But since use of biological warfare is by its very nature difficult to prove, the full range of substances deployed, and the number of people killed, may never be known. The victims were intended to die mysteriously, not only to protect the perpetrators, but also to add to the terror being visited on rural communities by other Rhodesian destabilizing operations.

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*"Don't you think they would have jumped at the chance to field test some of their own little toys. They can hardly do so in their own countries, but here we are killing black chaps. Who gives a damn."*

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The "fear factor" was a major element of the poison war. Rural populations and the guerrillas themselves were unaware of the causes of these sudden and mysterious deaths. As a result, a variety of explanations were invented, and often led to further deaths. In some cases the guerrillas, believing they were being poisoned by local people working with the Rhodesians, would retaliate for deaths in their own ranks by executing those who had prepared food for them. Witchcraft, too, was blamed, and guerrillas increasingly became involved in hunting out and executing suspected witches.<sup>17</sup> The gruesome chain reaction of violence destabilized and traumatized rural communities.

Rhodesian propaganda made great use of the escalating terrorism in areas affected by the poison war. Many supporters of the nationalist movement were appalled and confused by bloodletting at the hands of nationalist guerrillas. But only a handful of people in the CIO and Selous Scouts knew the real cause: The CIO through its covert war, especially its use of poisons, was itself creating the context in which guerrillas were turning to terrorism.

Although this widespread use of CB warfare did not affect the ultimate outcome of the war, it poisoned the future. To this day, the effects persist in the exchange of accusations and in the bitterness and hatred that lingers in villages decimated by the toxic war and its aftermath.<sup>18</sup>

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17. Nicholas Nkomo, a guerrilla commander in the west of Zimbabwe where the poison war resulted in many deaths between 1978 and 1980, explained to me how the mysterious deaths caused an almost complete breakdown of guerrilla operations. "By 1977 we had liberated the area from Rhodesian forces. But then we started to die from unknown causes. [Our] guerrillas began to execute sellouts and witches. We tried to stop it, but the fear was too much. The local people began to fear us, and the Rhodesian forces made a comeback." (Interview with Nicholas Nkomo, Bulawayo, June 1991.)

18. Former guerrillas have formed an organization, the Mafela Trust, which is now attempting to tackle the many destabilizing legacies of the war. The



Tim Jarvis/Impact Visuals

**Attacks against the ANC, marching above in a South African funeral procession, fit the pattern established in the counterinsurgency war in Zimbabwe.**

### Remaining Questions

Many questions arise from the poison war revelations. Who sanctioned the operation? Were other foreign agencies involved? What happened to the personnel and technology after Zimbabwean independence?

To answer the first question, I interviewed former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith. He simply denied any knowledge of the whole matter. "This is the first I've ever heard about it," was his memorable reply.<sup>19</sup> Rhodesian military commanders reluctantly admitted that they knew what I was talking about, but all claimed it was "a CIO thing." CIO Chief Ken Flower is dead and can't answer; Selous Scout commander Reid-Daly is in South Africa and won't talk.

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Trust is identifying the names of the war dead and their causes of death and publishing this information in local newspapers and magazines. The Trust also works with traditional leaders and healers in rural areas seeking to heal the wounds of war. Readers of *CovertAction* who are able to support this work can send contributions to The Mafela Trust, Box 364, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

19. Interview with Ian Smith, Harare, August 1991.



American Committee on Africa

**Ndabaningi Sithole (center), first leader of the dissident faction, ZANU, alleged to have had been recruited by CIA.**

Since there is as yet no definitive proof of upper level complicity, the unlikely possibility remains that the controversial and complex program could have been developed without the support and knowledge of the top military and political leadership.

On the second issue—outside involvement—most people I spoke to were convinced that foreign agencies were involved. Zimbabwean Minister of National Affairs Didymus Mutasa has no doubt: “We at the present moment are still unable to produce our own fertilizer without outside help. How could [the Rhodesians] have, ten or 20 years ago, gotten the sophisticated technology to produce [these poisons]?”<sup>20</sup>

Former CIO sources confirmed the South African role. The South African military, which bankrolled the Selous Scout operation and also much of the CIO work, had the right to be in even the most secret camps. South African Defense Force Forensic Department experts and intelligence personnel were present in the camps where the poison war was developed, and recent revelations about South African death squads have indicated widespread use of poisons by South

20. Interview with Didymus Mutasa, Harare, August 1991.



Evening News (London)

**Ken Flower, head of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization from 1964 to 1981.**

African agencies. General Lothar Neethlings, as head of the South African Defense Force Military Forensic Department, has been accused of providing a range of poisons to death squads for use against anti-apartheid activists.<sup>21</sup>

One South African victim of this program who survived, South African Council of Churches General Secretary Rev. Frank Chikane, fell ill in the U.S. in 1989. Tests by the FBI and the University of Wisconsin revealed he had been exposed to organophosphate poison—one of the principal chemical weapons used by the Rhodesians.<sup>22</sup>

Field testing of chemical and biological weapons by the Rhodesians must have been of great interest to many other countries. With their extensive penetration of the Rhodesian military and intelligence services, the British intelligence service, MI-6, could hardly have failed to learn the details of

21. Former South African Special Branch officer, Dirk Coetzee, has testified to having personally received lethal poisons from Neethling for the purpose of killing ANC members. Interviews with Captain Dirk Coetzee, Harare and Lusaka, 1990. *Apartheid's Assassins*, Channel Four Television, London, April 1990.

22. Chikane's case received widespread publicity in the U.S. and elsewhere. See press reports May to August 1989, and for an interview about the case with Chikane, see Jim Wallis, “A Ministry of Great Risk,” *Sojourners*, August/September 1989.

the poison war. Ken Flower himself confirms the close liaison he maintained with the CIA, MI-6, and other Western intelligence agencies.<sup>23</sup>

By 1979, charges of widespread use of biological and chemical weapons by the Rhodesians had created a scandal within the country's military and security circles. Both ZAPU and ZANU publicly accused the Rhodesians, and a District Medical Officer in Rhodesia published material on numerous cases of organophosphate poisoning in the *Central African Medical Journal*. Despite the secrecy, something strange clearly was taking place.

When I asked Major-General Sir John Acland, military commander of the British Forces in Rhodesia during the cease-fire and election period of 1980, whether he had been alerted to the poison war in his security briefings, he expressed great surprise at my evidence and denied any knowledge of the matter.<sup>24</sup> I found this reaction very surprising. So did Zimbabwean Minister of National Affairs, Didymus Mutasa: "If Western intelligence is as good as it is, one must believe they knew, and yes, that they connived."<sup>25</sup>

His assessment was confirmed by a South African source:

In this kind of game, the secret services all work together. The CIA and [British intelligence] had to know about it. Don't you think they would have jumped at the chance to field test some of their own little toys. They can hardly do so in their own countries, but here we are killing black chaps. Who gives a damn.

A former CIO officer added: "The British had [intelligence] officers who worked with us on some things. It's quite possible they did the same with the poisons, unofficially of course."<sup>26</sup> In the secret world, however, deniability is essential and hard evidence is scarce.

### Rhodesia's "Contras," Agents, and Secret Assets

In answer to the third question—What happened to the Rhodesian assets of the secret war?—there is hard evidence of where they went and how. But before dealing with that question, it is important to understand the remaining components of Rhodesia's secret armies and their international ties.

The Rhodesian CIO, like other intelligence agencies, maintained a broad network of agents, including those which, Flower proudly boasted, had extensively penetrated the na-



Afrapix

**Police watch South African funeral. The legacy of Zimbabwe's dirty war lives on in the terror marking this last legal bastion of white supremacy.**

tionalist movement. The CIO also recruited agents in neighboring states and was deeply involved in events in some of these countries.

Mozambique was a particular case with its extensive border with Rhodesia and, until 1974, a common war against nationalist guerrillas. In his book, Flower relates how he first learned of the potential for "pseudo" operations from Portuguese army and intelligence officers. The Portuguese army had developed a notorious network of "turned" guerrillas in both Angola and Mozambique. The Selous Scouts were formed on this model.

In turn, after Mozambican independence in 1975, the CIO decided to develop a contra-type operation directed against the new Frelimo government. Thus, the MNR or Renamo, which has created such devastation in Mozambique, also ran a radio station from inside Zimbabwe, broadcasting anti-Frelimo propaganda into Mozambique.

To these sinister assets must be added the "internal" black anti-nationalist armed forces developed by the Rhodesian army and CIO.

In the latter part of the Rhodesian war, military and intelligence commanders belatedly realized that the limits of white manpower—whites were outnumbered more than 25 to one—would ultimately lead to the defeat of the white minority regime. They were supported by intelligence and PsyOps personnel who had long argued that "black people could and should be doing the fighting." This argument was itself an extension of the long-standing CIO program to provoke conflict within the nationalist movement.

*(Continued on p. 58)*

23. Interview with former CIO officer, Harare, August 1991.

24. Interview with Major-General Sir John Acland, Britain, September 1991.

25. Interview with Didymus Mutasa, Harare, August 1991.

26. Interview with confidential source.

An unusually widespread and sustained epidemic of anthrax spread over Zimbabwe—formerly the British colony of Rhodesia—from 1978 to 1980. It affected large areas, killed thousands of head of livestock, and produced the largest number of human anthrax cases in one disease outbreak ever reported in the world. It caused extensive economic hardship in areas with a predominantly black population, while leaving white areas unscathed. Was it bad luck or biological warfare?



## Zimbabwe's Anthrax Epizootic

Meryl Nass

The epidemic coincided with civil war in Zimbabwe.<sup>1</sup> During the 1960s, Britain was granting independence and majority (*i.e.*, black) rule to its African colonies. As a means of ensuring continued white domination of the country, the Rhodesian white minority, under Ian Smith, pre-emptively declared independence from Britain in 1965. A small black guerrilla movement started and gradually enlarged, with the assistance of other nations, into a war.

As the war escalated, the government enacted increasingly harsh measures to punish any rural blacks it suspected of supporting the guerrillas. These actions further polarized the

population.<sup>2</sup> The whites—less than ten percent of the population—began to realize that despite use of mercenaries and black African soldiers, they lacked the manpower to win a guerrilla war.

In this setting of escalating war, terrorism, and random violence, the black population experienced an increase in human and animal disease. Given the fact that medical and veterinary services in the rural areas had become almost nonexistent as the war progressed, this rise did not seem too surprising. Anthrax was one of the diseases which experienced an upsurge toward the end of the war.<sup>3</sup>

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Meryl Nass, MD, is affiliated with Wing Memorial Hospital, Palmer, Mass., and the Department of Internal Medicine, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, Mass. Photo: Popular school. Bruce Paton/Impact Visuals.

1. In June 1979, Rhodesia became Zimbabwe-Rhodesia; in April 1980, Robert Mugabe became head of majority-ruled Zimbabwe.

2. J. K. Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 16-17.

3. Anthrax is a potentially fatal disease of humans and animals caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. Unlike most bacteria, anthrax organisms form spores when exposed to air, which may remain infectious for decades. Humans contract anthrax by eating or inhaling the spores or by exposure to spores through cuts in the skin. The fatality rate of inhalation anthrax is 95 percent, of

Anthrax had been present for a long time in Zimbabwe, as in most other countries, but Zimbabwe had historically experienced only a small number of cases. In fact, in 1967, it had been designated in the lowest incidence category for countries with anthrax.<sup>4</sup> All this changed at the end of 1978, when a major outbreak of anthrax began, and then spread throughout many regions of the country. "By the end of 1979, it [anthrax] was estimated to be active in about one third of the tribal areas of the country."<sup>5</sup>

### Unusual Features of the Epizootic

In order to explore whether Zimbabwe's anthrax epizootic (a disease outbreak affecting more than one species) was a natural occurrence, it is necessary to determine if the properties of the epizootic were compatible with the known behavior of anthrax in nature. It is also important to examine carefully all the hypotheses that have been proposed to explain the unusual characteristics of the epizootic, to see whether or not they can provide a convincing rationale for the observed behavior. Although the second type of detailed analysis is beyond the scope of the present article, it is available elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

**Number of cases:** The anthrax epizootic exhibited a number of peculiar features. First, the large number of cases was in itself unusual. Only an average of 13 human cases a year had been reported in Zimbabwe prior to the onset of the epizootic. Yet from 1979 through 1980, 10,738 human cases were documented and 182 people died of anthrax.<sup>7</sup> "At the beginning of what was to be a major epidemic," wrote Zimbabwean physician J.C.A. Davies, who wrote extensively about the epizootic, "it is safe to say that the majority of doctors in Zimbabwe had never seen a case of anthrax."<sup>8</sup>

gastrointestinal anthrax 50 percent, and of cutaneous anthrax, five percent. The vast majority of anthrax cases in the world are cutaneous and are caused by handling contaminated meat.

4. Max Sterne, "Distribution and Economic Importance of Anthrax," *Federation Proceedings*, vol. 26, 1967, pp. 1493-95. Sterne, originally from South Africa, is one of the world's experts on anthrax and developed an animal anthrax vaccine in the 1930s which is used today.

5. See J. A. Lawrence, et al., "The Effects of War on the Control of Diseases of Livestock in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)," *Veterinary Record* 1980, vol. 107, pp. 82-85. Fifty percent of Rhodesia's land area, the agriculturally better land, was reserved for whites; 50% was reserved for Rhodesia's blacks, who made up over 90% of the population. The black areas were named Tribal Trust Lands at the time of the war, and are currently termed communal farming areas.

6. See Meryl Nass, "Anthrax Epizootic in Zimbabwe, 1978-1980: Due to Deliberate Spread?" *PSR Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 4, December 1992.

7. Human cases for 1950-1963 were extracted from the *Annual Reports on the Public Health, for 1965-1977* from the Ministry of Health for Southern Rhodesia, Bulletin of diseases notified during months ended, and for 1978-1980 from the *Reports of the Secretary of Health*, Harare, Zimbabwe, Govt. Printer.

8. J.C.A. Davies, "A Major Epidemic of Anthrax in Zimbabwe," Part 1, *Central African Journal of Medicine*, vol. 29, 1983, pp. 8-12.

**Unusually Wide Area and Long Duration:** In Zimbabwe, the disease spread over time from area to area, into six of the eight provinces.<sup>9</sup> Yet, in the rest of the world, anthrax is considered to be a disease that is endemic in certain areas only. Those areas where the anthrax organisms can undergo the vegetative phase of their lifecycle, multiply, and then resporulate (reproduce) are limited. The soil must have an alkaline pH, and contain sufficient nitrogen, calcium, and organic matter. Based on epidemiologic analysis of anthrax outbreaks, it appears that extreme weather conditions must be present as well, in order for anthrax to compete successfully with the other microorganisms present in soil.



Keystone

**Government forces often destroyed villages to root out guerrilla support.**

A drought followed by heavy rains is an example of a weather pattern which has often preceded anthrax outbreaks.

Sufficiently high soil concentrations of anthrax spores to cause disease in animals who ingest them, seem to be sustained only transiently. Epizootics therefore usually only last for periods of weeks, and occur only in limited areas. There is no significant spread from animal to animal. Humans generally acquire the disease from contact with infected animal products, and there is little if any human to human spread. Therefore, anthrax epizootics do not spread to distant areas, and tend to resemble "point source" outbreaks of disease, such as food poisoning epidemics, rather than epidemics of diseases which spread by contagion, such as chicken pox.

9. Allan Pugh and J.C.A. Davies, "Human Anthrax in Zimbabwe," *Salisbury Medical Bulletin* (supplement), vol. 68, 1990, pp. 32-33.



## U.S. Politics, Pragmatism, and Biological War

When the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) came into force, the whole world should have issued a collective sigh of relief. It was, after all, a "model treaty," the first international agreement to ban the possession, as well as the use, of a whole class of weapons of mass destruction. The BWC was completed in 1972. By 1991, 114 countries, including the U.S., were parties and an additional 23 had signed but not yet ratified. The treaty categorized biological warfare (CBW) as "repugnant to the conscience of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

But as the possible use of anthrax as a weapon in Zimbabwe only three years later illustrates, the conscience of the world is flexible. After all, the sheer cost-effective utility of CBW agents for spreading death, economic devastation, intimidation, and terror is hard to resist. And, truth be told, from the beginning, the banning of CBW had less to do with morality than with the fact that this class of weapons is cheap, deadly, and within the technological and economic reach of the less, as well as the more, technically developed nations.

On November 26, 1969, while using napalm and Agent Orange in Indochina, the U.S. suddenly began advocating a ban on BW. "Biological weapons,"<sup>2</sup> said President Nixon, "have massive, unpredictable, and potentially uncontrollable consequences. They may produce global epidemics and impair the health of future generations."<sup>3</sup>

It is likely that the Nixon declarations against CBW were made less from humanitarian concern than from reasons of military strategy.<sup>4</sup> In the 1970s, the Pentagon was advancing the doctrine that while these agents were not militarily useful to the United States, they could proliferate to become the "poor man's atomic bomb." In other words, Third World nations could produce biological weapons of mass destruction more cheaply than nuclear, chemical, or even many conventional weapons.

Recent advances in technology have increased the danger of BW. Genetic engineering provides the potential to develop highly sophisticated biological agents, possibly including organisms with specific racial predilections.<sup>5</sup> "It is now possible to synthesize BW agents tailored to military specifications. The technology that

makes possible 'designer drugs' also makes possible 'designer BW,'" testified Douglas J. Feith, deputy assistant secretary of defense for negotiations policy, to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in 1986.<sup>6</sup>

Recognizing the potential threat to its national security, the U.S. has become increasingly concerned that other countries might be conducting prohibited research and developing new genetically engineered organisms or toxins. The political selectivity of this concern was evident during the Gulf War when the U.S. launched a major propaganda campaign against possible Iraqi use of both chemical and biological weapons, including anthrax, against U.S. troops. When chemical attacks had been aimed at unarmed Kurdish villages by Iraq, the U.S. had remained virtually silent. But after "U.S. ally Saddam" was transformed overnight into "another Hitler Saddam," the use of chemical weapons "against his own people" became an issue.

Assessing charges—including those lodged by Cuba and Nicaragua against the U.S.—of biological weapons use are problematic since the agents cause naturally-occurring diseases. Cuba charged that the U.S. used various biological warfare agents against it, including dengue fever against humans, other agents against the tobacco and sugar crops, and African swine fever against pigs—500,000 of which had to be slaughtered in 1971 to prevent spread of the disease. Several unnamed CIA employees and Cuban refugees provided details of the transfer of Swine Fever from the U.S. into Cuba.<sup>7</sup> In 1985, Nicaragua claimed the U.S. had deliberately spread dengue virus as part of its war effort.<sup>8</sup>

In the case of the 1978-80 Zimbabwe anthrax epidemic, there exists a highly suggestive body of circumstantial evidence supported by epidemiological research, and by the logic of the historical and political context. It points to an extensive, coordinated campaign of anthrax dissemination by the Zimbabwean government. If this conclusion is correct, the sigh of relief from those around the treaty table will be lost once again in the cries of those who succumbed no less horribly because the cause of death was a violation of international standards.

—Terry Allen

1. From the text of Biological Weapons Convention, completed on April 10, 1972, and signed and ratified by the U.S. and dozens of other nations in 1975.

2. The use of living organisms or their biologically active products to cause illness or death in humans, animals, or plants.

3. W.J. Stoessel, et al., *Report of the Chemical Warfare Commission*, Appendix E (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), pp. 90-91.

4. Raymond Zilinskas, "Verification of the Biological Weapons Convention," in Erhard Geissler, *Biological and Toxic Weapons Today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 87.

5. Charles Piller and Keith Yamamoto, *Gene Wars: Military Control*

*Over the New Genetic Technologies* (New York: Beech Tree Books, 1988), pp. 99-100; Carl A. Larson, "Ethnic Weapons," *Military Review* (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.), November 1970, pp. 3-11; and Tim Beardsley, "New View From the Pentagon," *Nature*, September 4, 1986, p. 5.

6. Piller and Yamamoto, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

7. Drew Featherston and John Cummings, "CIA Linked to 1971 Swine Virus in Cuba," *Washington Post*, January 9, 1977 p. 2; and Piller and Yamamoto, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50, 72.

8. Jeanne McDermott, *The Killing Winds* (New York: Arbor House, 1987), pp. 16, 77, 155-56.

**Unusual Pattern of Distribution:** Many of the Zimbabwe cases occurred in areas where anthrax had not previously been reported. Yet in the rest of the world, epizootics generally occur in areas known to have produced anthrax outbreaks in the past, where there is assumed to be chronic low density contamination of the soil. (Anthrax spores in soil may retain their virulence for decades.) The disease does not spread outside these areas. The exception to this occurs when an area has become newly contaminated. For example, use of bone meal fertilizer made from infected animals and found to contain anthrax spores, has caused outbreaks in England. However, fertilizers made from animal remains were not commonly used in the affected areas of Zimbabwe.<sup>10</sup>

**Confined by International Borders:** One would have thought that if weather conditions particularly favored the growth of anthrax in many areas throughout Zimbabwe, and often near its borders, then other anthrax outbreaks in adjoining countries would have occurred as well. Yet there were no reports of increased anthrax activity elsewhere in the region.<sup>11</sup>

**Respected Race of Inhabitants:** The epizootic was almost entirely confined to the black farming areas and black population; the 50 percent of Zimbabwe's land used by white commercial farmers was essentially unaffected. According to Zimbabwe Research Laboratory scientists, by early 1980 only four anthrax outbreaks, with 11 associated cattle deaths, had been reported in the commercial (white-owned) farming areas, while thousands of cases had occurred in the communal (black) farming areas.<sup>12</sup>

**Significant Timing:** The epizootic coincided with the final months of a long, brutal guerrilla war, which pitted black against white, and trailed off after the end of the war.

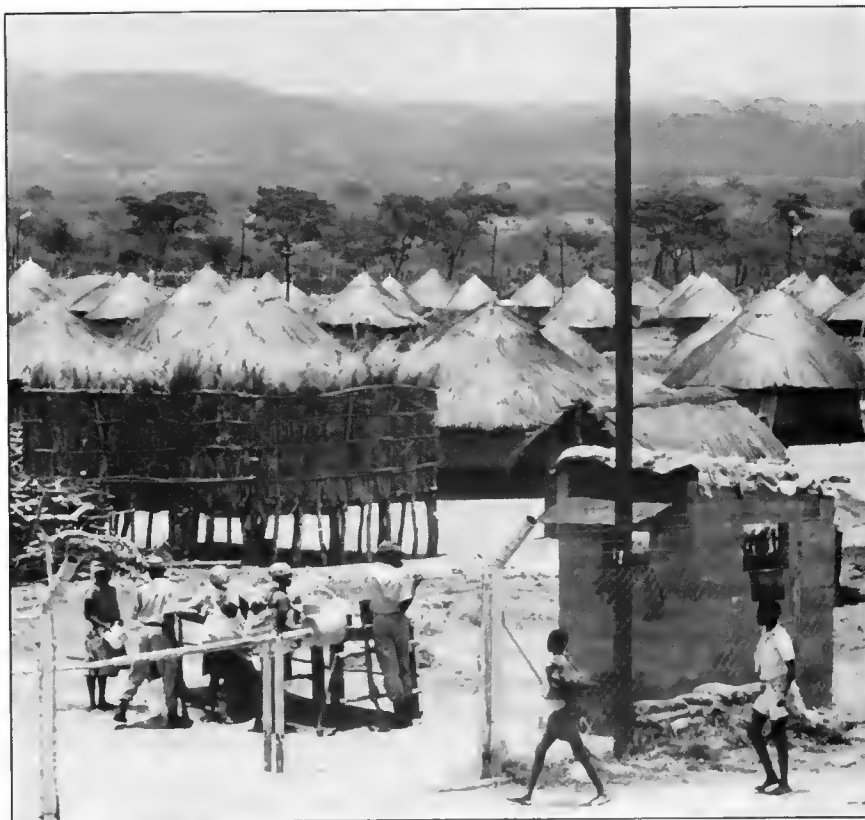
### Evidence of Biological Warfare

For this outbreak to have been a biological warfare event, both anthrax spores and delivery systems would have had to be available to a perpetrator. Given the fairly large land areas involved, were means of dissemination available that could have produced an epizootic of anthrax in cattle and cutaneous anthrax in humans, comparable to that which occurred?

10. W.E. Kobuch, *et al.*, "A Clinical and Epidemiological Study of 621 patients with anthrax in western Zimbabwe," *Salisbury Medical Bulletin*, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-38.

11. See the Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations), *Animal Health Yearbooks*, V. Kouba, ed., Rome, Italy, 1979, 1980, 1981.

12. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 84.



United Nations

Madzima, Rhodesia, 1976. Fenced-in "protected" village.

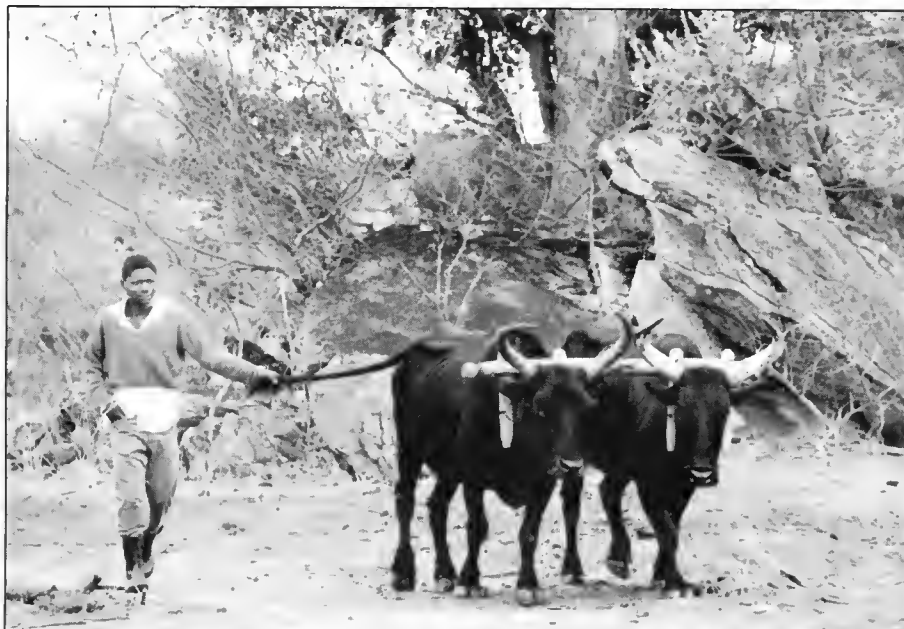
Could spreading a disease to animals and/or humans conceivably have aided the war effort?

There is evidence that obtaining or producing spores was within the means of those countries which wanted them. Production of spores is not technically difficult. Japan, the U.K., and the U.S. produced them as long as 50 years ago.<sup>13</sup> The U.S. is known to have created and stored such weapons until they were destroyed following Nixon's 1969 ban. A number of biological weapons was found in a CIA freezer after all U.S. biological weapons were reported to have been destroyed, ostensibly stored by a CIA employee without higher approval.<sup>14</sup>

Given the scope of foreign involvement with Rhodesia, the white government may have received the weapons from a country which had a secret program. It is also possible that Rhodesia was able to produce such materials domestically.

13. Barton J. Bernstein, "The Birth of the U.S. Biological Warfare Program," *Scientific American*, vol. 256, pp. 116-21; and Bernstein, "Churchill's Secret Biological Weapon," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, January/February 1987, pp. 46-50; and Peter Williams and David Wallace, *Unit 731: Japan's Secret Biological Warfare in World War II* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), pp. 121-40.

14. Sterling Seagrave, *Yellow Rain* (New York: M. Evans and Co., 1981), pp. 167-68; and "Unauthorized Storage of Toxic Agents," hearings before the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities (the Church Committee), 94th Congress, September 16, 17, 18, 1975.



Margaret Waller/Impact Visuals

**The deaths of thousands of head of cattle dealt a devastating blow to rural blacks by undermining their food production and economic viability.**

Many delivery systems for anthrax spores are relatively simple to produce or procure.<sup>15</sup> They could have allowed for the careful demarcation between affected and unaffected areas which was exhibited by the Zimbabwe epizootic. The simplest method of dissemination would have been by air, but other methods for contaminating the soil were also possible.

As to the utility of the epidemic, it is reasonable to ask how a disease which killed primarily cows, and usually produced curable skin ulcers in people, could be useful to the Rhodesian government's war effort. A review of some of the actions and strategies used by Rhodesia's military sheds light on this question. It indicates the range of military actions which were performed, and thus, considered acceptable.

Although in the early years of the conflict the guerrillas tended to engage in independent actions and remain in isolated areas, they soon learned that the political and material support of the indigenous peoples was essential to their success. They began regular nighttime meetings with local populations for political and historical education. People who had been initially willing to inform on strangers began to find reasons to support the insurgent cause. Both the government forces and the guerrillas began to seek out and punish those who betrayed them. As the war intensified and government administrative and educational systems broke

down or were driven out, the guerrillas replaced them with their own institutions.

Rhodesian military strategists knew that it was essential to separate the rural peasants from the guerrillas. Lieutenant-Colonel I. Bates listed some of the military's counter-insurgency tactics used in northeast Rhodesia in 1974:

Large external operations [attacks on neighboring countries] to turn off the tap [of insurgents re-entering the country]; a *cordon sanitaire* with warning devices, patrolled and backed by a 20 km.-wide no-go area; population control consisting of Protected Villages, food control, curfews and (eventually) martial law.<sup>16</sup>

### Counterinsurgency Strategies

The "Protected Villages" scheme was modeled on the "Strategic Hamlets" of Vietnam and a similar program used by the British in Malaya. Intended to preclude contact between the guerrillas and black civilians, the policy seriously reduced the standard of living and forced 750,000 rural blacks to relocate.<sup>17</sup> The Security Forces, however, gained the ability to "move freely in the vast depopulated areas."<sup>18</sup>

Food control, too, became a weapon of war through much of the country. Under the government's "Operation Turkey":

Farmers were to ration their laborers on a day-to-day basis with only sufficient food for a particular day. No surplus would therefore be available to feed insurgent forces, even were this demanded by force of arms. Tight food control would force insurgents to spend much time seeking sustenance, which would hasten their location and eventual elimination. A further advantage could result from hostility between the local population and insurgents as demands on limited available foodstuffs increased.<sup>19</sup>

The military's psychological operations unit tried to harness the spiritual beliefs of the indigenous people against the insurgent cause. Its members bribed spiritual mediums and distributed leaflets purportedly from spirit ancestors in order to persuade rural people that the spirits were against the insurgents and would bring misfortune to rebel supporters.<sup>20</sup>

15. Meryl Nass, "The Labyrinth of Biological Defense," *PSR Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1, March 1991, pp. 24-30; and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *The Problem of Chemical and Biological Warfare*, v. 2, *CB Weapons Today* (New York: Humanities Press, 1973), pp. 79-90.

16. Cilliers, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 18. A similar counterinsurgency strategy is currently employed in Guatemala, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Peru.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-71.

The campaign to discredit the guerrillas and destroy their local base went beyond psychological terror. The Rhodesian government created the Selous Scouts, a "pseudo" branch of the military responsible for obtaining the intelligence that led to the majority of insurgent casualties. The units were composed of captured insurgents who had been "turned" and then made to masquerade as guerrillas.<sup>21</sup> In addition to providing intelligence, the units were accused of committing atrocities—for which the guerrillas were blamed—against white civilians. They also deliberately violated established codes of behavior, accused innocent villagers of crimes, and executed them in order to smear the reputations of the actual insurgents—all while pretending to be guerrillas.<sup>22</sup>

During the same time period, hundreds of inexplicable poisonings occurred which were later traced to clothing soaked in organophosphates ("nerve gases"). Since the cause of the deaths was unknown, the incidents sowed widespread fear and engendered distrust between the people and the guerrillas.<sup>23</sup> The mysterious pattern of anthrax infection only added to the atmosphere of mistrust and terror.



White Selous Scouts prepare for a stint in the bush by "blackening" their faces.

There is always hardship, but if cattle die, the family loses its source of wealth; without motive power for plowing, crops cannot be planted leading to no food, no money to purchase food, pay school fees, bus fares, taxes, or buy the essentials to life. The family is reduced to grinding poverty and malnutrition becomes rife.<sup>24</sup>

A second effect of the anthrax outbreak might have been the confusion and fear generated by the appearance of an epidemic which affected *only* rural people and their cattle,

### The Consequences of the Epidemic

As the war dragged on, many Rhodesian whites left the country and eventually, all remaining white males from 18 to 58 years old were drafted to perform some military duty. Meanwhile, the economy came to a standstill and the Rhodesian government grew desperate. Despite imposing harsh measures including martial law, it was no closer to winning the war.

Under these circumstances, an epidemic such as anthrax would have further reduced the wealth and food supply of the rural people. The loss of cattle was a particularly critical problem for Rhodesia's rural blacks.

particularly in areas of heavy guerrilla activity, yet spared whites. Certainly attempts had been made to exploit other events, such as droughts, as a sign of displeasure from the spirits. It is not inconceivable that the effects of anthrax and of organophosphates were put to this purpose as well.

In any event, large-scale bombing raids into neighboring Mozambique and Zambia, use of organophosphates, the tactics employed by the Selous Scouts, provide examples of the Rhodesian military's disregard for the lives of black civilians.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe faced no international legal impediment against use of such weapons. Although the U.K. was a party to the Geneva Protocol which banned the use of chemical and bacteriological agents in war, Rhodesia had declared its independence from Britain in 1965; thus Rhodesia was probably not subject to the Geneva Protocol.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 118-34. The Geneva Conventions define as a war crime troops on one side disguising themselves as their enemy.

22. Ken Flower, *Serving Secretly: Rhodesia's CIO Chief on Record* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago, 1987), p. 259, as well as Cilliers, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-34. Flower, who died in the late 1980s, headed Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Organization during the war, and continued in the same position after the war, for the Mugabe government. His memoirs provide a rare glimpse into decision making by Rhodesia's leaders during the conflict.

23. Jeremy Brickhill, "Doctors of Death," *Horizon* (Harare, Zimbabwe), March 1992, pp. 14-17.

24. A.O. Pugh and J.C.A. Davies, "Human Anthrax in Zimbabwe," *Salisbury Medical Bulletin*, No. 68, Special Supplement, January 1990, p. 32.





### Legal Constraints on Biological Weaponry

The 1925 Geneva Protocol had banned chemical and bacteriological agents in war. It was provoked by widespread revulsion against the chemical weapons which had caused about 100,000 deaths and over 1,000,000 casualties in World War I.

Although it outlawed wartime use, the Protocol did not ban development, production, possession, or use outside wartime. Nor did it establish investigatory or sanctioning mechanisms in the case of violation.<sup>25</sup> Many nations reserved the right to retaliatory use, only giving up *first use*. Even within these limited constraints, becoming a party to the Convention did not guarantee compliance. In 1936 Italy, which *had* signed and ratified the treaty, sprayed Ethiopia with mustard gas, killing 15,000 soldiers and civilians.

The U.S. signed but never ratified the treaty. During World War II, in conjunction with Great Britain, it began a biological warfare program, focused on the development of anthrax and botulism weapons.<sup>26</sup> After the war, the decision was made to continue the program. When Japan's biological warfare program was discovered in 1947 by the U.S. military occupiers of Japan, scientists were sent from Camp (later, Fort) Detrick to Japan to investigate the Japanese program in depth.<sup>27</sup> Its head, physician Shiro Ishii, however, was unwill-

ing to provide information without assurance that he and his colleagues would not be prosecuted. After extensive discussions in Washington, the Departments of State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee decided that the value of the information which might be obtained from the Japanese regarding BW outweighed the value to be gained from prosecuting the scientists and physicians for war crimes.<sup>28</sup>

The Japanese BW scientists received the promise of secrecy and were never tried or punished. U.S. officials (and Japanese officials since) performed an extensive cover-up of Japan's BW tests and uses, even refusing to acknowledge U.S. P.O.W. survivors of Japanese experiments at Mukden.<sup>29</sup> Information about the Japanese BW program and the cover-up deal did not become public knowledge until the 1980s.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, during the late 1940s and 1950s, the U.S. expanded its biological warfare program. Judging by the organisms studied, which overlapped closely those investigated earlier by Japan, the scientists probably built on data obtained from Ishii, *et al.*<sup>31</sup>

The 1975 Biological Weapons Convention was a much more comprehensive treaty than the Geneva Protocol in that, in addition to use, it banned research, development, production, and possession of biological weapons or toxins for offensive use. It did, however, allow countries to retain stores of biological (weapons) agents necessary for "prophylactic or peaceful purposes." No precise definition of this wording appears in the treaty, nor are acceptable quantities of microorganisms specified. National Security Decision Memorandum 35, signed by Nixon's National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, and issued on the same day as Nixon's renunciation of biological weapons, specifically defined as permissible "research into those offensive aspects of ... biological agents necessary to determine what defensive measures are required."<sup>32</sup> The corollary suggests offensive agents may be produced so that defenses against them can be tested.

Although the 1975 treaty specifies that parties must enact "enabling" domestic legislation to enforce treaty provisions within member countries, compliance with this provision has lagged. The U.S. Congress, for instance, waited 14 years, until 1989, to pass legislation criminalizing the production and possession of biological weapons. Furthermore, the treaty itself carries no provisions for verification of compliance or sanctions for violators.

(Continued on p. 61)

25. Richard Falk, "Inhibiting Reliance on Biological Weaponry," in Susan Wright, ed., *Preventing a Biological Arms Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990) pp. 248-51.

26. Bernstein, "Birth of...", *op. cit.*; and Bernstein, "Churchill's Secret ...," *op. cit.*, pp. 46-50.

27. Located in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, the unit employed 3,000 men, including 50 physicians, and filled a compound of 150 buildings. It developed human and plant diseases as well as disease vectors, such as fleas for use as weapons. The program conducted tests on both military targets and civilian populations in 11 documented field tests and used World War II Allied prisoners of war and captive Chinese citizens as guinea pigs. (Williams and Wallace, *op. cit.*)

28. Williams and Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-11.

29. *Ibid.*

30. John W. Powell, "Japan's Germ Warfare: The U.S. Cover-Up of a War Crime," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 1980, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 2-17; and John W. Powell, "Japan's Biological Weapons 1930-45," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, October 1981, pp. 43-53.

31. See Erhard Geissler for lists of the microorganisms investigated by Japan in the 1940s, and by the U.S. in the 1950s: *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 22-23; and Williams and Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 250, who quotes an unnamed Fort Detrick official's 1981 statement: "It's very possible and probable that our scientists did get information from the (Japanese) tests."

32. Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-43.



## Gulf War Syndrome:

**T**HE SYMPTOMS: •Neurological problems •Recurring skin rashes •Chronic fatigue •Joint pain •Muscle spasms •Chronic headaches •Chronic diarrhea •Immune-system disorder •Chronic flu-like symptoms, including severe body aches •Hair loss (typically, 100 a day) •Gynecological infections •Miscarriages •Chronic nausea and vomiting •Respiratory problems, including breathing difficulty and sinus infections •Bleeding gums and mouth lesions •Unexplained and rapid weight loss.

## Guinea Pigs & Disposable GIs

Tod Ensign

So far, about 300 U.S. GIs who served with Operation Desert Storm in the Gulf have reported an array of chronic health ailments since they returned home. Some health experts fear that thousands more may develop similar problems in the years ahead.

The rapidity with which the Gulf vets have come forward to demand diagnosis and care contrasts with the earlier instances of service-related disease. The recent vets benefit from the legacy of Agent Orange-affected Vietnam veterans, some of whom have spent years challenging government stonewalling and fighting for health care to treat the effects of the toxic herbicide.<sup>1</sup>

Another factor at work may be the high number of reservists in Operation Desert Shield/Storm—the first war in which the U.S. military employed its Total Force Concept. Under this plan, active-duty and reserve units were deployed together and cooperated closely. After Iraq invaded Kuwait, a quarter of a million members of the National Guard and Reserves were activated and 106,000 of them were sent to the Gulf, where reservists accounted for roughly a third of all ground combat troops. While active-duty GIs might be reluctant to complain for fear of retaliation in an era when force-levels are being “downsized,” reservists are free from that

concern. They are also more likely to have access to support networks, media, and non-military medical systems.

Previously, when GIs reported cancers and other health problems potentially linked to fallout from nuclear bomb tests or Agent Orange, they met indifference and outright hostility. This time, the government has at least *appeared* concerned about the Gulf vets’ health allegations. Congress has already held two brief hearings and both military and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals have examined a number of these seriously ill vets.

In November 1992, President Bush signed a law authorizing the VA to encourage Gulf vets to seek free medical evaluations and to establish a national health registry which can help the VA

**Many GIs were never asked for their consent and did not know what vaccines they got.**

track long-term health trends. One serious shortcoming, however, is that active-duty GIs will not be allowed to participate in this registry. The VA’s director of epidemiology explained excluding up to two-thirds of those at risk. “It would be too expensive,” she told American Legion lobbyist Steve Robertson, “to include both groups.”<sup>2</sup> After the Vietnam war, the VA had resisted a similar program. Several years and much valuable data was lost before Congress finally ordered the department to create an Agent Orange Registry. Once it did, nearly 220,000 Vietnam veterans participated. Whether current government cooperation is simply a more sophisticated technique of crisis management, or reflects a genuine attempt to determine and treat service-related illness remains to be seen.

Tod Ensign is director of Citizen Soldier, a GI/veterans rights advocacy organization based in New York City. He recently contributed a chapter on military resistance to the Gulf War to *Collateral Damage: The New World Order at Home and Abroad*, Cynthia Peters, Ed., (Boston: South End Press, 1992).

1. Michael Uhl and Tod Ensign, *GI Guinea Pigs: How the Pentagon Exposed Our Troops to Dangers More Deadly Than War—Agent Orange & Atomic Radiation* (New York: Playboy Press, 1980), chapters 7-10.

2. Interview with author, November 13, 1992.



U.S. Marine Corps

Kuwait, February 1991. Environmental medicine specialist Janet Levatin confirmed that many of the vets' symptoms are consistent with exposure to petrochemicals, hydrocarbons, combustion gases.

### Possible Causes Identified

What has become known as the "Gulf War Syndrome" may actually result from a combination of factors, including:

- Smoke and pollution from some 600 oil-field petrochemical fires that burned in Kuwait for as long as eight months after the U.S.-led forces attacked Iraq.
- Two vaccines, pentavalent botulinum-toxoid and anthrax, and a medication, pyridostigmine bromide, which were designed as antidotes for biological or nerve gas weapons.
- Aerial spraying of pesticides over U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia.
- Spraying of diesel oil to control dust around U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia.
- Radiation exposure from depleted uranium used in some high velocity shells fired by M1A1 Abrams tanks and A-10 Thunderbolt fighter bombers.
- Portable heaters that used leaded gasoline and diesel fuel inside unventilated tents.
- Wholesale detonation of Iraqi ammunition depots without first determining whether or not they held toxic materials.
- Leishmaniasis—a parasitic infection spread by sand-flies.

**The number of sick vets depends, in part, on how aggressively government agencies look for them.**

### Possible War Crime

The most controversial of the possible causes of the syndrome are the two drugs—pyridostigmine bromide and pentavalent botulinum-toxoid vaccine—neither of which had cleared the required Food and Drug Administration (FDA) review for new drugs.

Some Americans are vaguely aware that this country signed the Nuremberg Charter, which provided the legal basis for prosecuting Nazi leaders at the end of World War II. Fewer know of its companion treaty, the Nuremberg Code, aimed at preventing future human experimentation of the sort

practiced by some German physicians. It is "absolutely essential," the code states, to obtain informed and voluntary consent for any medical treatment. There is no exception for wartime conditions or because soldiers are involved.

When the military decided to use the two unapproved drugs in the Gulf, it cited "military necessity," and petitioned the FDA to waive consent requirements. Although the FDA quickly acceded, some military advisers argued that the Pentagon hadn't needed the agency's permission to dispense the vaccines.

Just as U.S. bombs began falling on Baghdad, the Public Citizen Health Research Group (PCHRG) sued on behalf of unnamed soldier "John Doe" to enjoin the Pentagon from giving GIs the vaccines without first obtaining informed consent. U.S. District Court Judge Stanley Harris denied the public interest group an injunction to stop the program. "The decision to use unapproved drugs," he said, "is precisely the type of military decision that courts have refused to second-

guess."<sup>3</sup> The judge was following a number of precedents where courts have refused to make rulings that might interfere with military operations.<sup>4</sup>

When PCHRG appealed to the Circuit Court of Appeals,<sup>5</sup> the military shifted its position and claimed that the injection of the botulinum vaccine was only given with consent. Apparently, the government defense lawyers felt that since the anthrax vaccine enjoyed FDA approval, they didn't need to deal with the issue of consent to its use. "The Central Command," the Pentagon told the court, "... decided to administer the pentavalent botulinum-toxoid on a voluntary basis."

3. *Doe v. Sullivan*, 754 F. Supp. 12 (D.C.C. 1991).

4. George J. Annas, "Changing the Consent Rules for Desert Storm," *New England Journal of Medicine*, March 12, 1992, pp. 770-73.

5. *Doe v. Sullivan*, 938 F. 2d 1370 (D.C.Cir. 1991).

*CovertAction* has learned that these representations were lies. Four Gulf war veterans testified before a September 1992 House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing that they had been forced to take the vaccine. Phillip Abbatesse, of East Boston, quoted his Army superiors: "They said that if I didn't take the vaccination, then I was under UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice) action" (i.e., subject to court martial). Sgt. Venus Hammack, of Lowell, Mass., told the committee that she was held down and forcibly given the vaccine against her will. A third vet, Frank Landy, of Nashua, N.H., also reported that he was ordered to take vaccinations on two occasions. Paul Perrone, of Methuen, Mass., told the committee that he wasn't told until two weeks after his vaccination that it was supposed to be voluntary.<sup>6</sup> Numerous other Gulf vets interviewed by *CovertAction* also reported that they were never asked for their consent and most did not know what vaccines they had been given.

One Army Reserve doctor refused to serve in the Gulf, citing international law and medical ethics. Dr. Yolanda Huet-Vaughn, 40, of Kansas City, Kan., whose defense was organized by Citizen Soldier, attempted to prove during her 1991 court-martial for desertion that, as a physician, she had a duty under the Nuremberg Code, not to vaccinate GIs without their informed consent. The military judge barred all evidence of international law from her trial.<sup>7</sup> The jury sentenced the mother of three small children to 30 months—the most severe prison term received by any Gulf War resister. A strong international campaign of support won her release after she had served eight months.

The appeals court subsequently affirmed the lower court's refusal to enjoin the military.

### Early Warnings

One of the first alarms that health problems might afflict Gulf veterans was sounded soon after the war by four military doctors. Writing in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, they warned that although most returning vets were unlikely to contract infectious diseases, it might be years before such diseases appeared.<sup>8</sup>

In January 1991, as the war was beginning, the Department of Defense circulated a detailed memo to all medical service staff, warning them to be alert for a range of GI health

problems including reactions to anthrax and botulism injections, leishmaniasis, and effects from oil fires.<sup>9</sup>

As the war was ending, a panel of scientists at the Naval Medical Research Institute's Toxicology Detachment at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, compiled a comprehensive list of possible health problems from the oil-field fires. After consulting oil company experts who had extensive experience with oil-field fires and related environmental hazards, the panel identified several "agents of concern" including combustion products from burning oil wells and volatile hydrocarbon compounds in crude oil, both of which can be life threatening when inhaled. The military scientists



Department of Defense

**Vaccines against chemical and biological attacks may contribute to vets' illnesses.**

urged that people working near such fires be given respirators, eye goggles, and special gas detectors. Citing the report, American Legion lobbyist Steve Robertson charged that although the Pentagon had known for 18 months about the potential health hazards, it did little to identify or protect vets at risk. It is unclear whether the Navy report was widely circulated among various federal agencies.<sup>10</sup>

The Pentagon attracted some unwanted publicity to the health issue with its November 1991 announcement that none of the 540,000 Desert Storm GIs should donate blood until at least 1993. This action came after 28 vets were diagnosed with leishmaniasis, a potentially fatal disease transmitted by tiny sand-flies. Often called "tropica," leishmaniasis can affect the bone marrow, spleen, and liver, causing symptoms

6. Dolores Kong, "Gulf Veterans Describe Lingering Health Woes," *Boston Globe*, September 22, 1992, p. 1.

7. Citizen Soldier's cooperating attorneys Louis Font and Luther C. West are appealing the conviction, based in part on the judge's restrictive rulings. A decision is expected in 1993.

8. Drs. Lt. Col. Robert Gasser, Maj. Alan Magill, Col. Charles Oster, and Col. Edmund Tramont, "The Threat of Infectious Disease in Americans Return-

ing from Operation Desert Storm," *New England Journal of Medicine*, March 21, 1991, pp. 859-63.

9. Interview with American Legion's Steve Robertson, November 13, 1992.

10. Nick Tate, "Military Knew of Chemical Dangers in the Gulf," *Boston Herald*, August 6, 1992, p. 1.

## The Veterans Speak to Congress

The only time the ailing veterans themselves were officially heard was at a second hearing of a House veterans panel held in Boston a few days after the experts testified. One of the most powerful voices was Sgt. Venus Hammack, 37, of Lowell, Mass. Hammack, a mother of three with 16 years military service, explained that she had waited months before airing her health complaints because she kept hoping they'd go away. "One evening in the Gulf, I was treated in an evacuation hospital for a massive asthma attack. I saw approximately 20 other soldiers admitted for the same condition. I still have random attacks of asthma and dysentery, which cause me to be non-functional for the entire day," Hammack testified. "Since returning [home], I've had to be rushed to the hospital for prolonged bleeding several times. If you view my civilian and military medical records, you'll find no previous history of these disorders."

Hammack continued: "I don't know if my symptoms were caused by exposure to the fumes from the burning oil-fields, the injections, or the nerve agent tablets we were ordered to take. I ask—no, I demand continued support for female veterans and an expansion of services to veterans...until a name is given to our pain. When will these questions be answered with [something] other than, 'Don't worry about it?'"

The reservist told *CovertAction* she was forcibly held down and given the first vaccination. For the second shot a few weeks later, someone sneaked up behind her and injected her before she realized what had happened.

Paul E. Perrone, an Air Force veteran from Methuen, Mass., was also angry. "About three months after returning home," he testified, "I started experiencing occasional lightheadedness and fatigue, along with swollen gums, sore throat, ear infections, and joint and muscle aches." Still on active duty, Perrone made repeated visits to sick call. He was unable to pass his annual physical—something he'd done four times before. Because of his complaints, the Air Force sent him to two military hospi-

tals for evaluation, but it denied his request to extend his enlistment so that he could continue to receive government medical care. Perrone then requested a medical discharge which the Air Force turned down on the grounds that he was in perfect health.

Sgt. Frank Landy, of Nashua, N.H., told the committee: "I was a healthy, high-spirited individual prior to serving in [the Gulf]. I now live daily with shortness of breath, choking, and wheezing. I can't lie down and sleep like a normal person. ...For reasons unknown, I suffer from chronic diarrhea and continue to lose weight. I have fevers of 103°, recurring sores and a tingling sensation in both arms, especially when my heart rate is high. With little or no exertion, I suffer from extreme fatigue." Landy blames the two vaccine injections for his medical decline.

He closed with a bitter denunciation of his treatment by the military. "The type of substandard medical care provided by the military and the lack of adherence to regulations is sinful. My future and that of my family is undetermined due to the effect of the medications and the vaccinations."

Phillip J. Abbatesa of East Boston, who also served with an active-duty unit in the Gulf (the 101st Airborne Division), described similar symptoms. "I was sick with a high fever, had a hard time breathing and [plagued] by constant vomiting and dysentery. In the past, I had set records in physical training; now, I couldn't get back in shape. In February 1992, rectal bleeding [began], I couldn't digest food and my skin got scaly and blotchy."

When Abbatesa complained to his sergeant, he was called a liar and told to get out of the Army. Later, when base hospital referred him to another military hospital, no military transport was provided and his wife had to drive him, ailing, several hundred miles in their car. •

From testimony before House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care, September 21, 1992, Boston, Mass.

such as high fever, fatigue, weakness, and abdominal pain. The symptoms can range from mild to acute. The only reliable test for detection involves painful extraction of bone marrow, followed by an elaborate 47-hour lab analysis.

A Pentagon flyer circulated to Gulf veterans, "Briefing for Soldiers Returned from S.W.A. [Southwest Asia]—Leishmaniasis," falsely claimed that the disease is "not dangerous to your health and a normal healthy body will control the infection without medical treatment." The memo played down concern by urging that reservists "not make a special visit about this disease." If they choose to see a private doctor, the memo reminded, it would be at their own expense.

In October 1992, Chief of Infectious Diseases at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Dr. Charles Oster, estimated that between one and three percent of the 400,000 Gulf ground troops (4,000-12,000 people) were exposed to the blood parasite.<sup>11</sup> Apparently, Oster's warnings weren't appreciated in some circles; he has made no further public statements since this news report.

The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans' organization, published a list of suspected symptoms and a copy of a VA disability claim form in its May 1992 member-

11. "Test for Parasite Misses Many Gulf Vets," *Chicago Tribune*, October 8, 1992.

ship magazine. This action, which reached 3.2 million people, represents a significant shift for the politically conservative organization. During the early years of the Agent Orange controversy, the Legion, along with other veterans' groups, failed to challenge the deceptions practiced by the Pentagon and the VA.

Since the article, said Legion director of National Veterans Affairs John Hanson, Gulf veterans have contacted many of the Legion's claim officers. "At this point, we don't really know what is causing all these problems," he noted, "but that doesn't mean that nothing's wrong."<sup>12</sup>

Hanson believes that while the VA is genuinely interested in seeking answers, the military has been dragging its feet. "Exit physicals for Gulf War veterans were often little more than a paperwork formality," *The American Legion* magazine reported. "Some vets were even allowed to waive their exit physicals so that they could get home faster."<sup>13</sup>

Concern about the quality of exit physicals was buttressed by a General Accounting Office (GAO) report published in October 1992, which found that many veterans—especially from the Navy and Air Force—were not given physicals when they left the military. "The absence of a separation exam," the report concluded, "can make it difficult for a veteran to prove a claim [later] if he or she didn't seek treatment for the condition...during military service."<sup>14</sup>

### Clusters of Illness

The two largest clusters of ailing Gulf veterans to come forward so far are 79 Navy Seabees assigned to Camp 13 in Saudi Arabia and 80 members of the Indiana National Guard. The Army sent a team of specialists in occupational medicine, epidemiology, psychiatry, and dentistry to examine each of the Indianans. In its July 1992 report, the team concluded "that the documentable medical problems...in this group are typical of the general population." In subsequent media interviews, these doctors insisted that the reservists suffered only from "mental stress."<sup>15</sup>

That dismissal was incredible to the sick Indiana reservists.<sup>16</sup> "I've got a majority of the problems: muscle and joint aches, my hair's falling out and my gums bleed," Guardmember David McGregor told National Public Radio. "I break out in a rash once or twice a week. The worst is the lethargy and totally disrupted sleep patterns. I might go one night when I sleep only an hour and the next night, I sleep fourteen."

Another Indianan, 44-year-old Patricia Seawall, told a similar story. "Some days are real bad. I want to get up to get



Quality Postcards

Among injections given Gulf GIs were drugs not approved by the FDA.

a glass of water and my body [says] 'I don't think so.' It's like I'm totally weighted down. I have blurred vision. It's like when you open your eyes under water."

Reservist Wayne Miller, 38, of Corydon, also has trouble sleeping and suffers from rashes on his legs. "I just can't believe that with all of us around the country coming down with chronic fatigue, unexplained rashes, aching joints, blurred vision...that we have nothing in common." Miller links his problems to his Gulf duty. "I was at the port [near oil-well fires] for a long time. It would get so [dark] during the day that it seemed like dusk. We'd wash our clothes and when you took them out, it looked like a bucket of oil."

The other large cluster of the mysterious syndrome is 79 Georgia Seabees who served together in the Gulf. Four of the reservists told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that they are unable to work at their former civilian jobs because of their illness.<sup>17</sup> Some Navy doctors believe that about 25 of the ill Seabees suffer from leishmaniasis. "I'm trying to identify a set of symptoms and physical signs that defines the illness," said Lt. Commander Chris Ohl of Bethesda Naval Hospital.

That task is not made easier by the fact that many physicians and scientists disagree about what medical tests and procedures should be used in evaluating these veterans. Reserve Major Richard Haynes of New Albany, Ind., who has been actively trying to inform his fellow reservists about Gulf War health problems, believes that military researchers are not performing the relevant tests. "The Indiana reservists, for example, should have had tests for nerve conductivity, functional liver capacity, and for brain damage." Working on his own, Haynes has located over 160 Gulf veterans in 25 states who report some, or all, of the symptoms associated with the Gulf War syndrome.<sup>18</sup>

12. Interview with author, October 1992.

13. "Gulf War Veteran: Document Ailments Now," *The American Legion*, May 1992, pp. 18-26.

14. "Missed Physicals Hurt Gulf War Veterans," *Army Times*, November 2, 1992.

15. ABC-TV, 20-20, August 29, 1992.

16. The following testimonies are from: "All Things Considered," Richard Harris, National Public Radio, September 15, 1992.

17. "Gulf Vets Who Served in Same Camp Show Cluster of Mysterious Ailments," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 19, 1992.

18. Interview with author, October 31, 1992.



Just how many veterans are actually sick seems to depend, in part, on how aggressively government agencies look for them. A VA study of about 3,000 Gulf vets processed through Ft. Devens, Mass., found that about 17 percent suffered from some or all of the ailments reported by vets elsewhere. "It's very preliminary," said VA psychologist Jessica Wolfe, "but we're seeing a number of people from units throughout New England that seem, at least on the surface, to have problems similar to [other] veterans."<sup>19</sup>

### Depleted Uranium Shells Another Hazard

Among other possible contributing factors to the Gulf War Syndrome is radiation from depleted uranium high-velocity shells. Thousands of these dense projectiles were fired by M1A1 Abrams tanks and A-10 Thunderbolt fighter bombers, to penetrate tank armor. On impact, radioactive oxidized uranium is released into the air. A May 24, 1991, Army memorandum from the Armament, Munitions and Chemical Command states: "Depleted Uranium presents a possible hazard [because] it is a heavy metal that can be toxic if ingested or inhaled. [It] becomes a hazard only when burned either by fire or with the heat of impact in a target area."

The Army has admitted that at least 62 GIs were exposed to the radiation. VA specialist Dr. Belton Burrows examined 12 reservists from New Jersey's National Guard who were exposed to depleted uranium, but found no evidence that any of the men were harmed by the radiation. One of the exposed vets, Mark Panzera, attributes the headaches, fatigue, and chronic diarrhea he now suffers to the uranium-laced dust in tanks he helped prepare for shipment back to the States. The reservists' congressman, Representative Chris Smith (R.-N.J.) wants any veteran exposed to depleted uranium included in the VA's Gulf Registry. The Army has no plans to track this group. "We feel as though we have run this about as far as it needs to run," said Col. Peter Myers, radiological consultant to the Army Surgeon General.<sup>20</sup>

Another subject of sharp debate is whether female vets or the wives of returning vets have suffered increased health problems, such as miscarriage, gynecological infections, or birth defects. Four women from Ft. Hood, Texas, who served together in the Gulf reported persistent gynecological infections, abnormal pap smears, and cervical problems requiring biopsies. The women blame their new ailments on their Gulf service. The Army's response? "There is no developing pattern of these problems at Ft. Hood," said a spokesperson.<sup>21</sup>

East Boston vet Phillip Abbatessa told the House veterans panel in Boston, "I know that a lot of women at Ft. Campbell,

Kentucky [where he served] are having a hard time carrying children. There were a lot of miscarriages this year." Late in 1991, the antiwar Military Families Support Network announced that they were receiving many reports of miscarriage from female GIs and veterans' wives. In December, the Army Surgeon General's office denied that either group was suffering abnormal numbers of miscarriages. Major General Ronald Blanck claimed that the current miscarriage rate (about 8 percent) was the same as it had been before the war and was about half the national average.<sup>22</sup>

Clearly, the military, with hard-liner Blanck as point man, is gearing up to defend itself. "The health of the military during Desert Storm," he testified on September 16, 1992, to the House panel, "was better than in any previous [war]." Discounting lack of FDA approval, Blanck vigorously defended the use of botulism vaccinations and pyridostigmine bromide. "They were not and are not experimental. They are well-known and have been in use for many years," he argued. Interestingly, he didn't claim, as the Pentagon did before the Court of Appeals, that only GIs who consented were vaccinated.

The good doctor also dismissed other possible causes of the reported illnesses including oil fire pollution and other chemical hazards. In his view, the intense heat of the oil-field fires burned off most of the toxins. "The big smoke plumes that everyone saw were almost pure carbon; we didn't find heavy metals or other volatile compounds that would [make

us] really worry," he reported.

Finally, Blanck noted that nearly all of the 300 vets who have reported health problems so far were reservists, perhaps implying that somehow they are more prone to complain or be injured.

He concludes, citing no evidence and backed by no studies, that, "Although there are a few exceptions, generally those on active duty do not have these symptoms."

As always, the Pentagon has an array of "experts" on hand to testify that no scientific evidence links the Gulf vets' health problems to their military service. When the House Veterans Affairs committee held its first hearing on the syndrome in September 1992, Dr. Lewis Kuller, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh, assured the panel that the only known health effect from Gulf duty is a small number of leishmaniasis cases. "I'm very concerned that there will be continuing efforts to generate 'new epidemics' that are supposedly related to the oil fires." Kuller also disparaged the creation of a Gulf Registry, claiming it would not provide any answers for worried veterans.<sup>23</sup>

The Environmental Protection Agency officer who led the federal inter-agency Air Pollution Assessment team to Ku-

**The Army has admitted  
that at least 62 GIs were  
exposed to radiation.**

19. Nick Tate, "Toxins Eyed In Mysterious Gulf War Ailments," *Boston Herald*, August 3, 1992.

20. Soraya Nelson, "Radiation, Storm Illnesses Link Alleged," *Army Times*, October 12, 1992, p. 28.

21. Sandra Evans, "Vet Groups Call for Study of Possible Desert Storm Illness," *Washington Post*, April 29, 1992, p. A11.

22. Katherine McIntire, "Surgeon General Says Miscarriage Rate Normal," *Army Times*, December 9, 1991.

23. Testimony, House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care, September 16, 1992, Washington, D.C.

wait acknowledged that emissions from the many oil-field fires could cause acute and chronic health effects. Jim Makris testified that, nonetheless, his team found "no levels of [toxic] chemicals at levels high enough to merit a public health concern."<sup>24</sup>

Other scientists, however, were less eager to dismiss health risks. Professor William Thilly, affiliated with MIT's Center for Environmental Health, questioned some of the government scientists' conclusions. "I find that the Petroleum Toxicity Task Force interpreted their [mandate] very narrowly. For instance, their focus on volatile polycyclics. The volatile chemicals do not concentrate the greatest concentrations for exposed persons. It's the non-volatiles which are bound to the particulates that [we] breathe deep into our lungs," stated Thilly. He recommended that the medical records of veterans with health complaints be grouped according to chemicals to which they may have been exposed. He also urged the government to consider that some veterans may be hypersensitive to vaccines and other chemicals.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, several other independent scientists have suggested that some Gulf veterans may be suffering from "Multiple Chemical Sensitivity" (MCS). Dr. Theron Randolph, of Dallas, who is considered both a founder of modern epidemiology and the creator of the MCS diagnosis, examined two Gulf vets and determined petroleum poisoning. Dr. Alfred Johnson of the Environmental Health Center in Dallas, concluded that pollutants other than oil fires and spills may be a factor in the veterans' illnesses. Johnson's clinic is a national leader in treating MCS sufferers for a variety of illnesses after acute or long-term exposure to chemicals. Dr. Janet Levatin, a Boston environmental medicine specialist, confirmed that many of the vets' symptoms are consistent with patients exposed to petrochemicals, hydrocarbons, combustion gases, and pesticides.<sup>26</sup>

### Forecasting the Future

Despite the flurry of publicity and the support of some congressmembers, ailing GIs and vets face a long, hard fight if they are to receive adequate medical care and disability compensation. The precedents set by the treatment of Agent Orange and nuclear test victims are not encouraging. It is still not in the military's economic or public relations interest to admit insufficient regard for the health and safety of those who served. Furthermore, the demands on the public purse have intensified over the last decade and both the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs (formerly the Veterans Administration) know that the salad days of the Carter-Reagan-Bush era are over. The vets will have to prove

that their illnesses are service-related—a feat made more difficult by the lack of thorough medical exit examinations and insufficient monitoring and data collection.

In the Gulf vets' favor, however, veterans' organizations are more united and experienced in advocating veterans' claims than in the past.

One of the most important issues to be resolved in the months ahead will be the kinds of tests and procedures the VA and military doctors use in evaluating claimants. The law establishing the Gulf War Veterans Health Registry required only that veterans shall receive a "health examination and consultation." Unless veterans and their advocates are vigilant, the government may get away with providing only superficial exams that will not detect any of the more subtle or complex health problems from which these veterans may be suffering.

The Agent Orange experience teaches that it is essential that independent medical personnel and scientists are involved from the beginning to watchdog every step the government takes. The stakes are high and the potential cost, both in lives and dollars, is enormous.

Operation Desert Storm has already taken a horrific toll on the people of Iraq and Kuwait. Will Gulf War veterans be added to this tally in the years ahead? Does the U.S. have the political will to look honestly at this issue?

We now know that the manufacturers of Agent Orange worked closely with the Pentagon and the VA to conceal data about human health effects. One brave EPA scientist, Cate Jenkins, recently charged that a key Monsanto Company study of herbicide health effects was fraudulent.<sup>27</sup> The federal courts used this phony study to justify

**The many oil-field fires could cause acute and chronic health effects.**

the grossly inadequate settlement of the Agent Orange class action in 1984. Given their histories and what is at stake, it would not be surprising to discover that Hoffman-LaRoche and other manufacturers of the vaccines given GIs are working behind the scenes to contain the government investigation of Gulf veterans' health problems.

Recently, the parents of an ailing GI from Florida wrote Representative Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.) about their son, Ron. "Since returning home, [his] mental abilities have deteriorated to the point of [being] life-threatening. During this time, his physical appearance [also] became alarming. His hair began to fall out, weight loss, a bleeding ear, some hearing loss, aching joints, constant flu-like symptoms, and bouts of diarrhea. We were struck to see a 22 year-old man look like a man in his mid-thirties. ... Ron and many people like him put their young lives on the line. ... All they ask in return is that...our country stand by them, to find out what this Desert Storm illness is and to help the soldiers in need—whatever the cost."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Testimony, House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care, September 21, 1992, Boston, Mass.

<sup>26</sup> *Boston Herald, op. cit.*, August 3, 1992.

<sup>27</sup> Jeff Nesmith, "Monsanto Altered Dioxin Study, EPA Memo Says," *Indianapolis Star*, March 23, 1990, p. A3.

# Agent Orange: The Dirty Legal War at Home

A. Namika



On May 7, 1984, nine years after the Vietnam war ended and six years after the first Agent Orange claim was filed in New York state, Judge Jack B. Weinstein of the Federal District Court in the Eastern District of New York "settled" the case. The chemical companies which had manufactured the deadly dioxin-laden herbicide used to defoliate Vietnam were pleased with the decision. The thousands of veterans who were ill, or dying, or had children with birth defects, however, felt that they had been denied justice. They charged that the federal courts helped the chemical companies avoid paying billions of dollars to those injured in the Dirty War.<sup>1</sup>

## The Agent Orange Cover-Up

Another six years later, a 1990 congressional investigation revealed that the Reagan/Bush administrations had manipulated a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study on the effects of the toxins.<sup>2</sup> Initiated in 1982, the controversial CDC study of Agent Orange exposure and Vietnam veterans' health was terminated in 1987 after concluding that damage from the herbicide could not be assessed. Pressured by veterans' groups, the Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee (HRIRS) conducted a year-long (1989-90) exhaustive investigation into the CDC study.

The HRIRS subcommittee found that the Agent Orange exposure study should not have been canceled. CDC's inability to assess exposure and correlate it with illness resulted from a flawed investigation, not a lack of evidence. "Other methods were available," charged the subcommittee, "but [were] intentionally disregarded." The report concluded that "the CDC study was changed from its original format so that it would have been unlikely for the soldiers who received the heaviest exposure to the herbicide to be identified."<sup>3</sup>

The subcommittee also concluded that the CDC study was controlled and obstructed by the White House, primarily through its Agent Orange Working Group (AOWG) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), "because the Reagan administration had adopted a legal strategy of refusing liability in military and civilian cases of contamination involving toxic chemicals and nuclear radiation."<sup>4</sup>

With the government absolved by its legal immunity from responsibility for injuries to military personnel, the veterans' only recourse was to sue the chemical companies for damages. At about the same time as the initiation and eventual subversion of the CDC study, the first Agent Orange suit was winding its way through the courts. Judge Weinstein, who took over the case in 1983, rejected the plaintiffs' expert witnesses. He was, however, open to "scientific" evidence provided by the very chemical companies that had produced the deadly herbicide and ruled that there was no evidence that the toxin had injured anyone.

A. Namika is a free-lance journalist who has written on Agent Orange and the Bhopal disaster. Photo: Bob Rand, C-123 sprays Agent Orange in Vietnam.

1. Peter H. Schuck, *Agent Orange on Trial: Mass Toxic Disasters in the Courts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987). This is the most comprehensive account of the first Agent Orange case and its forced settlement by a judge.

2. Committee on Government Operations, "The Agent Orange Coverup: A Case of Flawed Science and Political Manipulation," House Report (H. Rep.) 101-672.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

A number of Agent Orange cases had been filed against chemical companies in the late 1970s when increasing numbers of Vietnam vets began dying prematurely, reporting debilitating illnesses, or claiming their children had birth defects. Most of these cases were consolidated into a class action, *Ryan v. Dow*, in the Eastern District Court of New York.

When the ostensibly liberal Judge Weinstein "contrived" a settlement,<sup>5</sup> the named chemical companies—including Monsanto Co., Hercules Co., Inc., T.H. Agriculture & Nutrition Co. Inc., Diamond Shamrock Chemicals Co., Uniroyal, Inc., and Thompson Chemicals Corporation, as well as Dow Chemical Co.—were gleeful. Their stocks registered an immediate gain on the New York Stock Exchange.<sup>6</sup> The reaction of the veterans, however, was almost overwhelmingly negative.

In 1989, some veterans and their relatives—who had not experienced any dioxin-related illnesses at the time of the first settlement, and therefore did not consider themselves bound by it—filed a second Agent Orange case in Texas. On request of the defendant chemical companies, the Multi-District Litigation (MDL) panel, appointed by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, removed *Ivy v. Diamond Shamrock* to the same Brooklyn judge who had forced the meager settlement in the first case. The vets subsequently asked Weinstein to withdraw, charging that the judge had a conflict of interest because of his fiduciary role in a foundation he had established using the funds from the 1984 settlement. If *Ivy* were returned to Texas, the fund would lose \$10 million.

### A Judge's Fiefdom

In the earlier case, the court had rejected expert evidence from the vets connecting Agent Orange to the host of cancers and neurological diseases which afflicted them. By the time of the *Ivy* case, the link had been irrefutably established. Instead of barring the new evidence, Weinstein did the next best thing—he discounted its relevance.<sup>7</sup> He handed down novel decisions leading finally to his April 1992 dismissal of the case solely on procedural grounds. *Ivy* is now on appeal in the Second Circuit.

5. Schuck, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

6. *New York Times*, May 8, 1984, p. B4.

7. See affidavits submitted to the court in the *Ivy* case, CV-89-03361 (E.D.N.Y.), Plaintiffs' Exhibit H, EPA official Cate Jenkins, "Recent Scientific Evidence Developed After 1984 Supporting a Causal Relationship Between Dioxin and Human Health Effects"; and Exhibit I, Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Vietnam (1968-70). (Available from Greenpeace USA, 1436 U St., NW, Washington, DC 20009.)

At first glance, Weinstein's original 1984 settlement of Agent Orange class action litigation seemed to favor the veterans. The \$180 million figure was the largest amount of damages recovered in any personal injury suit. Nonetheless, most of the 2,500 veteran plaintiffs who spoke at "fairness hearings" held by the judge,<sup>8</sup> came away feeling ignored and bitter. The judge had divided the settlement into two separate funds. One delivered an average \$3,200 for death and total disability claims, and nothing for any lesser injuries.<sup>9</sup>

"By contrast, [when *Ivy* was filed] more than \$20 million had already gone to the plaintiffs' lawyers, court-appointed officials, retained experts, and the company that administers the veterans' claims, court records show."<sup>10</sup>

The second fund, the \$52 million Agent Orange Class Assistance Program (AOCAP), is basically a grant-making foundation under Weinstein's direct supervision and control, administered by managers whom he hires. In a 1991 "guidance" memo, grantees were issued a virtual gag order on the day Weinstein decided the *Ivy* case: "Speaking as AOCAP-funded program representatives, you may not take a position on the case or Judge Weinstein's ruling. Nor may you express opinions as to the causal relationship between Agent Orange and any specific ailment or condition."<sup>11</sup>

The later case, *Ivy, et al.*, argues that Weinstein, in effect, created a virtual fiefdom, using the settlement money to control veterans' organizations and influence government policy.<sup>12</sup> The brief also asserts that the judge has influenced the advocacy efforts of the veterans' leadership and redirected its attention from issues adversely affecting the interests of Agent Orange manufacturers, who would, were it not for Weinstein's intervention, face

billions of dollars of potential liabilities.<sup>13</sup>

If veterans or their families, who were not involved in the 1984 settlement, accept any assistance from either fund, they risk sacrificing future claims against the chemical companies and having the settlement retroactively enforced on them.



Laurie Peek/Impact Visuals

Bob Muller, Vietnam veteran leader.

8. See *Ryan v. Dow*, 618 F. Supp. for text of order, pp. 623-25. (E.D.N.Y. 1985).

9. See *Ryan v. Dow*, 781 F. Supp. 910 (E.D.N.Y. 1991).

10. Steven Labaton, "Five Years After Settlement, Agent Orange War Lives on," *New York Times*, May 18, 1989.

11. AOCAP memo, October 4, 1991, from Dennis Rhoades, head of AOCAP, to grantees, subject: "Court Issues Ruling in *Ivy* Case."

12. Brief for *Shirley Ivy, et al.*, No. 92-7575 (2d Cir.).

13. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

This forfeiture includes the genetically damaged children of Vietnam veterans, many of whom were not even born at the time of the settlement.

### Media-Industry Blitz on Dioxin

In the wake of damaging evidence from the *Ivy* case and several other court struggles on the effects of dioxin (a major toxin in Agent Orange), chemical companies began an orchestrated media blitz. In 1990, Dr. Vernon Houk, who had been senior statistician in the Agent Orange CDC study, asserted that previous assessments of the harmful effects of dioxin were overestimated. Since 1983, he claimed "there has been a large body of human data accumulated that indicated, in my opinion, that man is not as susceptible to the consequences of dioxin exposure as many of the animal species

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*If the corporations are victorious in  
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studied to date."<sup>14</sup> When cross-examined by late Congressman Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.) in his subcommittee hearings, Houk admitted contact with the paper industry while he was developing new relaxed standards of dioxin exposure.<sup>15</sup>

The chemical and paper industries quickly took up Houk's refrain that dioxin was less toxic than previously believed.<sup>16</sup>

Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, commander of U.S. naval forces in Vietnam (1968-70) and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1970-74) became an ally of the vets after his son died of Agent Orange-related causes. He charged that Houk's widely quoted statements were "politically motivated efforts to cover up the true effects of dioxin, and manipulate public perception [and] coincide with similar, economically motivated, efforts of chemical companies that produce dioxin."<sup>17</sup>

Congressman Ted Weiss, whose subcommittee spearheaded the Agent Orange investigation was alarmed by the PR campaign. "Dioxin," he said, "is unsafe at any dose. The public has been duped by an industry propaganda campaign and a handful of federal scientists who have carried the industry's message to the highest levels of government. They have spread false information about new scientific evidence that dioxin is safe at low levels, and that federal standards should be weakened."<sup>18</sup>

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14. H.Rep. 101-672, p. 18.

15. See July 26, 1990 hearing of the Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee, pp. 22-40.

16. Jeff Bailey, "Duellling Studies: How Two Industries Created a Fresh Spin On the Dioxin Debate," *Wall Street Journal*, February 20, 1992, p. C12; and David Lapp, "Defenders of Dioxin," *Multinational Monitor*, October 1991, pp. 8-12.

17. Affidavit in *Ivy* case, CV-89-03361 (E.D.N.Y.) p. 8.

18. House of Representatives, HRIRS, Committee on Government Operations, June 10, 1992, 102nd Congress.

### Implications for Other Mass Toxic Tort Cases

The Agent Orange case has established precedents for "settling" cases so that chemical companies and other corporate criminals get off relatively cheaply—i.e., for hundreds of millions rather than the billions of dollars that could result from a jury verdict. Under Weinstein's approach, a mass toxic tort settlement can put a federal judge in control of a small financial empire on behalf of an ill-defined and powerless constituency of injured plaintiffs.

At present, the dockets of the state and federal courts are "swamped" with tort claims over exposure to radiation, formaldehyde, benzene, lead, silicone, DES, and bendectin, as chemical companies and their lawyers point out.<sup>19</sup> For asbestos products alone, in 1991, there were about 100,000 pending claims in the federal and state court systems.

The solution recommended by corporations facing mass toxic tort cases such as Agent Orange, Bhopal, asbestos, etc., is to prevent them from ever reaching a jury. Under the guise of cutting litigation costs, corporate law firms try to tailor "designer settlements," like that for the 1989 Agent Orange case, for use in the event of any disaster. The Center for Claims Resolution (CCR), which has endorsed such settlements in an *amicus* brief in support of defendants in the *Ivy* case, is a non-profit organization, formed by transnational corporations including Union Carbide and Pfizer. CCR "has considered possibilities for a large group settlement encompassing the claims of those individuals who have been exposed to asbestos and who may in the future contract an asbestos-related disease."<sup>20</sup>

Despite the difficulties for Agent Orange vets in the Reagan-Bush courts, they have found unexpected allies in the 21 state attorneys-general who recently joined the *Ivy* case as *amici curiae*, in the Appeals Court.<sup>21</sup> In their brief, the AGs argue that the *Ivy* case should not have been removed from Texas where it was filed by Texans against a Texas corporation. Furthermore, they assert, since there were no federal issues involved, removing it to a federal court, was a violation of a state's right to maintain an independent judiciary.

The *Ivy* case brings vital issues into focus. On one side of this protracted struggle are the due process rights of victims and the rights of states to exercise control over the corporations which impact the lives of their citizens. On the other side are giant corporations and the Reagan-Bush judiciary. If the vets win, they will not regain their health or the time spent fighting in the courts, but they will get some justice and legitimate monetary compensation. If the corporations are victorious in the courtroom, they will win a \$3,200 license to kill. Either way, the struggle is not over with *Ivy*. With so much at stake, the loser is sure to appeal to the Supreme Court.

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19. Brief for the Center for Claims Resolution as *Amicus Curiae*, October 30, 1992, in *Ivy v. Diamond Shamrock*, No. 92-7575 (2d Cir.), pp. 2-3.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

21. Brief *amici curiae* of the State of Alabama (*et al.*) in support of appellants, September 16, 1992, No. 92-7575 (2d Cir.).



**W**ith a deteriorating economy and the concomitant rise in unemployment, along with spiralling racism, the notion inevitably bubbles to the surface that incarceration may not be sufficient to deal with widespread crime and violence; perhaps, more punitive measures are needed. Rather than confront the racism, unemployment, and poverty that have left millions without hope—or the means of subsistence—the government and many social scientists continue to direct research toward finding a genetic explanation or a medical “solution” for those who do not docilely accept their fate. The long history of “scientific racism” in the U.S. helps provide a rationale for this potentially genocidal approach and creates the context for the National Violence Initiative and the intemperate remarks of Dr. Frederick Goodwin.

## Race Backwards: Genes, Violence, Race, and Genocide

Gerald Horne

When he took the podium to address the National Health Advisory Council on February 11, 1992, Dr. Frederick Goodwin, then head of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), did not know he was about to ignite a major crisis. By the time he finished his remarks, he was embroiled in a raging controversy that has raised profound questions about efforts to deal with escalating problems in urban areas. Goodwin told his audience:

If you look, for example, at male monkeys, especially in the wild, roughly half of them survive to adulthood. The other half die by violence. That is the natural way of it for males, to knock each other off and, in fact, there are some interesting evolutionary implications of that because the same hyperaggressive monkeys who kill each other are also hypersexual, so they copulate more and therefore they reproduce more to offset the fact that half of them are dying. Now, one could say that if some of the loss of social structure in this society, and particularly within the high impact inner city areas, has removed some of the civilizing evolutionary things that we have built up and that maybe it isn't just the careless use of the word when people call certain areas of certain cities jungles, that we may have gone back to what might be more natural, without all of the social controls that we have imposed upon ourselves as a civilization over thousands of years in our own evolution....<sup>1</sup>

By associating African-Americans with monkeys and “hypersexuality,” Goodwin tapped into a wellspring of racist sentiment. He also provoked anti-racist anger. Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), a leading member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), objected strenuously to Goodwin's remarks and helped draft a letter signed by all 26 CBC members. It raised the issue of whether Dr. Goodwin had the necessary sensitivity and approach to continue heading a major government agency. Conyers asserted that Goodwin's

dangerous and simplistic explanation for the violence in our cities evokes a type of social Darwinism that has long been discredited and continues to function as a smoke screen for the separate and discriminatory treatment of African-Americans. It ignores a complex set of root causes of drug use and violence in our society.<sup>2</sup>

The CBC was joined in its denunciation by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Congressman John Dingell (D-Mich.)<sup>3</sup> as well as the 114,000-member American Psychological Association and the 137,000-member National Association of Social Workers.<sup>4</sup>

Administration and most of the media reactions were more supportive of Goodwin. The *Wall Street Journal* invoked

February 11, 1992 meeting of the National Health Advisory Council is available, as are most items cited here, from Center for the Study of Psychiatry, Inc., 4628 Chestnut Street, Bethesda, MD 20814, 301-652-5580.

2. Letter to the Editor, *Wall Street Journal*, April 1, 1992.

3. Editorial, “The Fred Goodwin Case,” *Washington Post*, March 21, 1992.

4. Leary, *op. cit.*

Dr. Gerald Horne is a professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara.  
1. Warren Leary, “Struggle Continues Over Remarks by Mental Health Official,” *New York Times*, March 8, 1992, p. 34.; partial transcript of the

## Racially Targeted Bio Warfare

Also stirring concern is the grotesque marriage between long-standing Pentagon interest in chemical/biological warfare and genetic research. Since the end of World War II, Pentagon "innovations" in warfare overwhelmingly have been used on people of color, from Korea, to Vietnam, to Grenada, to Panama, to Iraq. Now it seems that some of the experimentation may be employed against people of color again—this time (continuing a practice once used against Native Americans), at home.

The Pentagon has researched "ethnic weapons," i.e., weapons that interact negatively with persons with more than a modicum of melanin skin pigmentation. Under contract from the U.S. Navy, the University of California's Naval Bio-Science Lab in Alameda, conducted extensive tests on a fungus endemic to California's central San Joaquin Valley, *coccidiomycosis*, or "valley fever."<sup>1</sup> Spread by wind-blown spores, the disease attacks the lungs and can move to other organs and bones. In this second stage, the disease is extremely dangerous, with upwards of 50 percent fatalities.

UC discovered that African- and Asian-Americans were especially susceptible to "valley fever," with blacks ten times more likely than whites to die. This fact was well-known to the U.S. Army and Navy, which has studied the fungus as a potential biological weapon since the 1940s.<sup>2</sup> By 1962, the U.S. Army employed 40 scientists on full-time genetic research on this and numerous other projects.<sup>3</sup>

Congressional hearings in 1977 revealed that the U.S. Army had contaminated shoes and naval stores with *aspergillus fumigatus*—a benign fungus which behaves like valley fever. The target was unwitting African-American civilians employed as dock and warehouse workers at a Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, naval depot. "Since Negroes [sic] are more susceptible to *coccidioides* than are whites," one Pentagon official testified, "this fungus was simulated."<sup>4</sup> The spores were successfully spread to warehouses, trucks, elevators, and three Navy ships.<sup>5</sup>

Much of this research was already advanced by the time of a seminal article by Professor Carl A. Larson of the Department of Genetics at Lund University in Sweden, which laid out a blueprint for the development of all manner of "ethnic weapons."<sup>6</sup>

With the advent of DNA gene technology, and the marked interest which the Pentagon has taken in it, the specter of new, more sophisticated "designer weapons" is especially ominous.<sup>7</sup>

1. *The Problem of Chemical and Biological Warfare: CB Weapons Today*, vol. II, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1973, p. 122.

2. Charles Piller and Keith Yamamoto, *Gene Wars: Military Control Over the New Genetic Technologies* (New York: Beech Tree Books, 1988), p. 100.

3. Robert Harris and Jeremy Paxman, *A Higher Form of Killing: The Secret Story of Chemical and Biological Warfare* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 266.

4. "Biological Testing Involving Human Subjects by the Department of Defense," Senate Select Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research, 1977.

5. Conn Hallinan, "Using CBW at Home and Abroad," *People's Daily World*, April 6, 1989.

6. "Ethnic Weapons," *Military Review* (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas), November 1970, pp. 5-11.

7. Piller and Yamamoto, *op. cit.*, p. 24; and Andrew Weinschenk, "Army Gives A Boost To Exotic, Non-Lethal Weapons," *Defense Week*, October 19, 1992.



NIMH

Dr. Frederick Goodwin

the specter of the "speech-police" and rushed to Goodwin's defense.<sup>5</sup> Although Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Louis Sullivan criticized the remarks, he in effect rewarded Goodwin by appointing him head of the similarly influential National Institute of Mental Health—a post not requiring Senate approval or presidential appointment.<sup>6</sup>

## The Violence Initiative

And if the "monkey" remarks were not bad enough, Goodwin, during his notorious February 11 speech, casually revealed plans for a new National Violence Initiative. This proposal was slated to become the number one funding priority for the National Institute of Mental Health by 1994—the agency Goodwin would soon head. HHS has since declined to clarify the current status of the Initiative except to deny that it includes genetic research. *Covert-Action* learned that the General Accounting Office "is looking into the entire research portfolio."

The initiative came as a surprise to many in Congress. Rep. Conyers was upset not only with the proposal, but with the lack of public disclosure surrounding it. Health and Human Services, he charged, had not been able to "supply us with the paper work on this initiative and the two African-American members of the Mental Health Advisory Panel were unfamiliar with the program."<sup>7</sup>

Under the Initiative, researchers will use alleged genetic and biochemical markers to identify potentially violent minority children as young as five for biological and behavioral interventions—including drug therapy and possibly psychosurgery—purportedly aimed at preventing later adult violence.

The Initiative specifically rejects any examination of social, economic, or political questions, such as racism, poverty, or unemployment. Instead, this bio-medical approach focuses heavily on the alleged role of the brain neurotransmitter, serotonin, in violence. Not coincidentally, this approach is favored by many in the medical industry.

As Dr. Peter Breggin, the leading analyst in the field has observed,

5. Editorial, "The Speech Police," *Wall Street Journal*, March 9, 1992.

6. Leary, *op. cit.*

7. Letter, *Wall Street Journal*, *op. cit.*

This [approach] corresponds with the current financial interests of the pharmaceutical industry, since several drugs affecting serotonin neurotransmission have been submitted for approval to the Food and Drug Administration.... The controversial antidepressant, Prozac, is the first of these serotonergic drugs, and it has become the largest moneymaker in the pharmaceutical industry.<sup>8</sup>

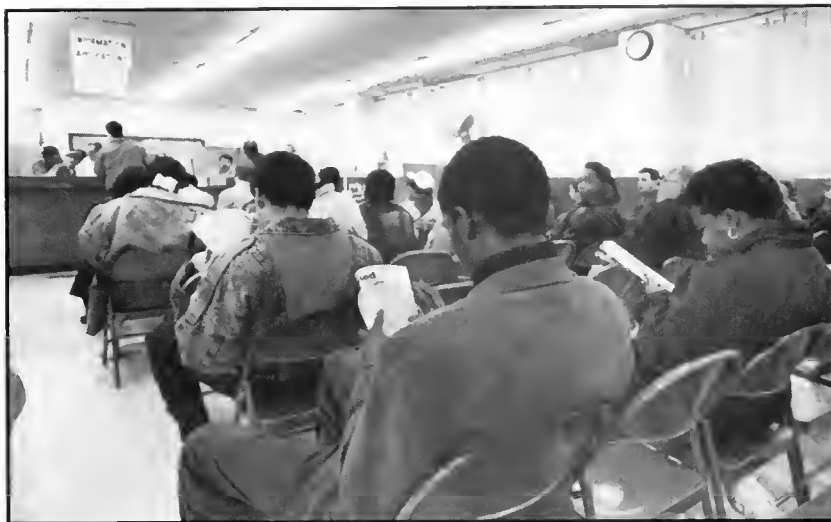
Against this backdrop, NIH provided a hefty \$100,000 grant for a conference entitled "Genetic Factors in Crime: Findings, Uses and Implications." It was to be sponsored by the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland and slated for October 1992. The promotional brochure promised that

genetic research holds out the prospect of identifying individuals who may be predisposed to certain kinds of criminal conduct, of isolating environmental features which trigger those predispositions, and of treating some predispositions with drugs and unintrusive therapies.<sup>9</sup> ...Genetic research also gains impetus from the apparent failure of environmental approaches to crime—deterrence, diversion and rehabilitation.<sup>10</sup>

With this last statement, the conference planners appeared to write off an entire generation, and focus exclusively on various genetic and medical solutions.

The ensuing protest caused NIH to freeze conference funding—temporarily. The objections were led by enraged African-Americans concerned that, in these dangerous times, such a project could easily be transformed into directed genocide. Their concern was not assuaged when it was revealed that Reagan appointee Marianne Mele Hall proclaimed that black and brown people are culturally or even genetically inferior. They have been conditioned, she said, "by 10,000 years of selective breeding for personal combat and the anti-work ethic of jungle freedoms" and were therefore unfit for civic life. Great Society programs just "spoiled" them, she argued, encouraging a sense of entitlement that led to laziness, drug use, and crime, particularly crime against whites.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the fear that such a conference would encourage racism and broaden the path for potentially genocidal efforts, the NIH revealed recently that it was considering unfreezing the funds so that the conference may go forward in 1993.<sup>12</sup>



Robert Fox/Impact Visuals

**"Experts" blame high unemployment rates for black males on genetic or medical factors rather than on systemic economic problems.**

### The Disease Model

The last time such an initiative was proposed, a firestorm of protest erupted. The context, not unlike today, was rising unemployment and poverty in the euphemistically termed "inner cities." Neurosurgeon William Sweet testified in 1968 before the New York state legislature that those participating in urban uprisings were suffering from brain disease (psychomotor epilepsy); *i.e.*, blacks who rebelled against their plight could be "cured" by carving their brains or drugging them.<sup>13</sup>

That same year "successful" psychosurgery was performed on California prisoners<sup>14</sup> and other "undesirables."<sup>15</sup> Dr. Jewell Osterholm and his associate, Dr. David Matthews, confessed to performing psychosurgery, or cingulotomies, on drug addicts, alcoholics, and "neurotics." According to Dr. Peter Breggin, "a cingulotomy is nothing more than the newest version of lobotomy. It can turn a person into a zombie. It makes the patient docile, subdued and easy to manage."<sup>16</sup> This latter description was precisely what certain U.S. elites desired for often-rebellious blacks.

Perhaps Sweet and his colleagues, Dr. Frank Ervin and Dr. Vernon Mark, were inspired by these programs. In any case, they went directly to Congress for funding and in 1971, the NIMH awarded them a \$500,000 contract, with the Justice Department kicking in a supplemental grant. Their mission was to research the causes of violence, with particular attention to possible genetic factors and to investigate treatments,

13. David Bird, "More Stress Urged on Cause of Civil Disorders," *New York Times*, August 14, 1968, p. 19.

14. Leroy F. Aarons, "Brain Surgery Is Tested on Three California Convicts," *Washington Post*, February 25, 1972, pp. A1, 20; Peter Breggin, "Psychosurgery for Political Purposes," *Duquesne Law Review*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1975, pp. 841-62.

15. Larry Fields, "Addict Who Died Had Brain Surgery to Fight Habit," *Philadelphia Daily News*, March 13, 1972; Breggin, "Psychosurgery...," *op. cit.*, p. 855.

16. B.J. Mason, "Brain Surgery to Control Behavior: Controversial Options Are Coming Back as Violence Curbs," *Ebony*, February 1973, p. 68.

8. Peter Breggin, "The Violence Initiative—A Racist Biomedical Program for Social Control," *The Rights Tenet*, (Center for the Study of Psychiatry) Summer 1992.

9. Christopher Anderson, "NIH, Under Fire...," *Nature*, July 30, 1992, p. 357.

10. Vince Bielski, "Hunting the Crime Gene," *San Francisco Weekly*, July 15, 1992.

11. Micaela di Leonardo, "White Lies: Rape, Race and the Myth of the Black Underclass," *Village Voice*, September 22, 1992.

12. David L. Wheeler, "Genetic-in-Crime Meeting May Get Funds From NIH," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 30, 1992, p. A14.

## Dangers of Genome Project

The Human Genome Project is a multi-billion dollar government research effort to obtain the genetic information hidden in every human cell. This is no small task since the human genome contains between 50,000 and 100,000 genes. In fiscal 1992, the project is funded by two federal agencies, the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Energy. There is similar research occurring in Europe and Japan, and scientists hope to complete their basic work by 2005.

There is a distinct fear, however, that the ultimate effect of this research will be to give a further boost to the eugenics movement or the effort to create allegedly superior human beings via human engineering.

There are other possible consequences. Employers could use this more detailed information on genetics to deny certain people jobs, such as those who have sickle cell anemia (who were discriminated against by the Air Force and by airlines) or those who have cystic fibrosis. This information could be used to exclude such persons from medical coverage. In other words, a system of "genetic scarlet letters" or "genetic passports" might ensue.

A recent Harvard Medical School study turned up about 30 instances of genetic discrimination; for example, an auto insurer refused to cover a man with a genetically-based neuromuscular disorder who suffered no disability and an employer who refused to hire a woman after she revealed she had the same disorder. All this led Rep. Bob Wise (D-W.Va.) to warn about the possibility of a chilling development—the creation of a "genetic underclass."

From: Daniel Kelves and Leroy Hood, "Genetic Labyrinth," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, November 8, 1992.

including psychosurgery and amygdalotomy.<sup>17</sup> Although public pressure eventually caused them to lose their funding, the effort to disguise racism as objective research and the search for a medical "cure" for socioeconomic problems did not die.

In 1972, the state of Michigan moved forward with funding for research into controlling violence through psychosurgery and chemical castration. Fortunately this project, too, was aborted in the face of public protest. In light of similar approaches today, the words of the neurologist in charge of this 1972 project, Ernest Rodin, remain relevant. Children of "limited intelligence" tend to become violent, he suggested, when treated as "equals," and were better brought up in an "authoritarian life style." Much violence could be avoided by castrating "dumb young males. ... It is also well known," he went on, "that human eunuchs, although at times quite scheming entrepreneurs, are not given to physical violence."<sup>18</sup>

17. Breggin, "Psychosurgery...", *op. cit.*

18. *Ibid.*, p. 853; and Ernest Rodin, *A Neurological Appraisal of Some*

The next year, the popular African-American monthly, *Ebony* reported a disturbing story about Dr. O.J. Andy, a neurosurgeon at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, who had been performing psychosurgery, or thalamotomies. Dr. Andy revealed that the kind of brain damage that could necessitate such radical surgery might be manifested by participation in the Watts Uprising. Such people, he diagnosed, "could have abnormal pathologic brains." In addition to inducing docility, side effects to such surgery could include loss of memory, dreams and daydreams, intellectual emptiness, lack of awareness, lack of creativity and loss of the ability to get angry. The desired result was enforced passivity for black and other communities perceived as dissident.<sup>19</sup>

Fortunately, the scientific community did not rest supine in the face of this atrocity. Dr. Seymour Pollack, among others, challenged sharply the idea that participating in a civil insurrection was a sign of mental disorder.<sup>20</sup> A remarkably diverse coalition sprang up in Congress to stymie the original violence initiative 20 years ago.

## Roots of the Eugenic Solution

The historical roots of viewing rebellion against intolerable conditions as symptoms of disease go back more than a century. In the early years of the 19th century, Samuel Cartwright, a physician, argued that particular forms of mental illness caused by nerve disorders, were prevalent among slaves. Drapetomania, for example, could be diagnosed by a single symptom: the uncontrollable urge to escape from slavery. The symptoms exhibited by slaves who "suffered" from *dysaesthesia aethiopica* were more complex and included destroying plantation property, disobedience, talking back, fighting with their masters, or refusing to work. Despite the aura of expertise and the Latin terms, Dr. Cartwright and his 19th and 20th century counterparts were not practicing neutral science. Rather, they were providing convenient explanations that served to justify and rationalize the systemic exploitation practiced by their paymasters.<sup>21</sup>

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**"...instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime..., society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind." —U.S. Supreme Court, 1927**

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*Episodic Behavioral Disturbances with Special Emphasis on Aggressive Outbursts*, Exhibit 3 for American Orthopsychiatric Association; and *Kaimowitz v. Department of Mental Health*, Civil No. 73-19, 434-AW (Circuit Court, Wayne Co., Michigan, July 10, 1973).

19. Mason, *op. cit.*

20. Letter, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, November 13, 1967.

21. Carol Tavris, *The Mismeasure of Woman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), pp. 176-77.

In addition to blaming disease, some scientists and social scientists have concocted a genetic model to explain their own presumed racial superiority and justify exploitation and repression of their "inferiors." Such structured, organized disinformation has been part of social science since the "Age of Enlightenment." Sir Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, coined the term eugenics for his study of how humans inherit physical and behavioral traits.<sup>22</sup>

Proponents of genetically-based inferiority hold that a whole race is biologically, irredeemably inferior. The endemic nature of this racism tells less about the individuals who promote it than about the society that fosters their rise to positions of power. Remarks like Goodwin's, comparing blacks with monkeys, are not isolated. In the wake of the 1965 Watts uprising, ultra-right Los Angeles Police Chief William Parker anticipated Goodwin's analysis by comparing African-Americans to "monkeys in a zoo."<sup>23</sup> The L.A. police who beat Rodney King echoed the slur when they used the term "gorillas in the mist."

The genetic model has endured not because it has any scientific basis, but because it is useful. Around the turn of the century, eugenics took the ethnically diverse U.S. by storm. It provided a "scientific" justification for stigmatizing African-Americans, Asians, and Eastern and Southern European immigrants and forcing them to work for less.

Theories of genetically determined inferiority also legitimated calls for forced sterilization. Theodore Roosevelt was not alone in calling for this radical solution to social problems.<sup>24</sup> In 1907, Indiana passed the first law allowing involuntary sterilization of "confirmed criminals, idiots, imbeciles and rapists."

A 1937 survey found that compulsory sterilization of so-called habitual criminals was supported strongly by "progressive" intellectuals and policymakers who were keen on applying social science to society. In 1939, the prominent Harvard anthropologist, E.A. Hooten, advocated "ruthless elimination of inferior types" and "biological housecleaning." By 1940, 30 states had sterilization laws, often for such vaguely defined "crimes" as "moral degeneracy"; 22 states continue to have such laws on the books.<sup>25</sup>

The legal basis in the U.S. had been established by a 1927 Supreme Court decision: "[It] is far better for all the world,"

proclaimed Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes on the constitutionality of sterilization, "if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime..., society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind."<sup>26</sup>

Thus, chillingly, the U.S. preceded the Nazis down this genocidal path. It was not until 1933, that Germany approved the Nazi Eugenics Sterilization Law. It was, noted New York University Prof. Norman Finkelstein, "the first fateful step toward the final solution."<sup>27</sup>

The misuse of social science to justify racism had deep roots in Europe. French research in 1857 "demonstrated" that



Ted Soqui/Impact Visuals

**The L.A. uprising following the King beating verdict was seen by some as proof that people of color needed more control, either through medication or prison.**

criminality was hereditary. In 1874, Richard Dugdale published a study of an Irish family he called Jukes in which he purported to trace their hereditary tendency toward crime. In Italy in 1876, in his study, *L'Uomo Delinquente*, Cesare Lombroso asserted that criminals were the products of heredity and could be recognized by features such as small restless eyes (thieves) or bright eyes and cracked voices (sex criminals). Sadly, he did not leave us with a reliable method by which a robber baron could be recognized.

Quaint and vicious as that 19th century research now appears, it differs little from the intellectual offspring it has spawned in the last years of the 20th century. Contemporary "scientists" have simply become more sophisticated in delineating alleged "markers" that predict who will become a "criminal." In the 1970s, for example, the XYY chromosomal configuration was said to be associated with crime and violence.<sup>28</sup> And as the 1992 Violence Initiative and the proposed Maryland conference demonstrate, the misbegotten search continues. Like Dracula, "scientific racism" continues to rise from the dead to stalk black America, in particular.

22. Daniel Coleman, "New Storm Brews on Whether Crime Has Roots in Genes," *New York Times*, September 15, 1992, p. B5; and James Lawler, *IQ, Heritability and Racism* (New York: International, 1978), p. 39.

23. "Races," *Time*, August 27, 1965, p. 11.

24. Thomas Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1980). Like many of the U.S. elite at the beginning of the 20th century, Roosevelt held firm views about the inferiority of certain racial and ethnic groups.

25. Letter to the Editor, *New York Times*, September 18, 1992, p. 34.

26. *Buck v. Bell*, 274 U.S. 207 (1927).

27. Letter to the Editor, *New York Times*, September 18, 1992, p. 34.

28. Coleman, "New Storm Brews...", *op. cit.*, p. B5.





Nancy Shia/Impact Visuals

**Imprisonment has become the solution of choice for controlling unruly minorities.**

### Déjà Vu All Over Again

Not only science and government, but the media have been complicit in perpetuating the mythological link between genes and crime. Shortly before Goodwin's remarks to the advisory council, the *New York Times* gave front-page coverage to a modern Jukes study. "More than half of all juvenile delinquents imprisoned in state institutions and more than a third of adult criminals in local jails and state prisons have immediate family members who have also been incarcerated, according to figures compiled by the Justice Department."<sup>29</sup> Backing up the article were predictable quotes from Harvard Professor Richard Herrnstein, who has been attacked in the past for taking stands on genes and crime perceived widely as racist. "These are stunning statistics," he said, accepting the unproven innuendo of genetic causality.

Some of the studies to determine "markers" for crime are indeed stunning. In Nebraska, seven genetic marker systems were analyzed from liquid blood and dried bloodstain specimens and submitted from various law enforcement agencies throughout the state to the Nebraska State Patrol Crime Laboratory. The reported results indicated that criminal facial and body types correlated with crime statistics.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, it could be concluded easily, darker peoples may be committing more crime not necessarily because of socioeconomic conditions but because of genetic predisposition.

29. Fox Butterfield, "Study Finds a Family Link to Criminality," *New York Times*, January 31, 1992, p. A1.

30. "Distributions of Genetic Markers in a Nebraska Population," *Journal of Forensic Science*, vol. 35, no. 5, September 1990, pp. 1207-10.

And if bad genes are the cause, the cure is certainly not education, jobs, equality of opportunity, decent health care, and an end to racism. Rather the solution is that people of color must reproduce less, be pharmacologically or surgically "repaired," or incarcerated.

### The Media and the Myth of Neutral Science

Given the present climate, exploring the nature side of the nature-nurture controversy relating to crime and race is, in principle, objectionable. In the context of a declining capitalist economy suffused with racism, such research could be transmuted easily into a bludgeon wielded especially against people of color.<sup>31</sup>

Research is never "neutral." Who asks the questions, what questions are asked and what ones ignored, who pays for the research, who interprets the results are all subjective decisions outside the realm of "pure

science." The bias is built in.

It is not only the kind of research which is problematic, but how the elite media choose to report it that promotes and perpetuates those biases. The *New York Times*, as noted, placed on the front page a pedestrian—at best—study suggesting genetic links between race and crime. In contrast, in 1988, Prof. Delbert Elliott of the University of Colorado-Boulder published the results of his 10-year study demonstrating that black youth from poor sections of cities are only slightly more likely to commit crimes than are white youths from affluent neighborhoods. He factored in that the latter are more likely to have connections allowing them to escape punishment. Prof. Elliott was correct in his euphoric assertion that, "These findings have really challenged the old concepts about crime." Perhaps that is why the study received little attention.<sup>32</sup>

31. It would be a mistake to suggest that all current research is "Jukes revisited." To get an idea of contemporary research, e.g., Adrian Raine and Jennifer Dunkin, "The Genetic and Psychophysiological Basis of Antisocial Behavior: Implications for Counseling and Therapy," *Journal of Counseling and Development*, vol. 68, no. 6, July-August 1990, p. 637; Jennifer White, et al., "How Early Can We Tell? Predictors of Childhood Conduct Disorder and Adolescent Delinquency," *Criminology*, vol. 28, no. 4, November 1990, pp. 507-33; Diana H. Fishbein, "Biological Perspectives in Criminology," *Criminology*, vol. 28, no. 1, February 1990, pp. 27-72; Glenn Walters and Thomas White, "Heredity and Crime: Bad Genes or Bad Research?" *Criminology*, vol. 27, no. 3, August 1989, pp. 455-85; Margaret A. Jackson, "The Clinical Assessment and Prediction of Violent Behavior: Toward a Scientific Analysis," *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, vol. 16, no. 1, March 1989, pp. 114-31; Lawrence Cohen and Richard Machalek, "A General Theory of Expropriative Crime: An Evolutionary Ecological Approach," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94, no. 3, November 1988, p. 465.

32. Boyce Rensberger, "Study Discounts Race, Class as Studies in Youth Crime," *Washington Post*, August 15, 1988, p. A3.

## Target: Black and Brown Youth

Science which seeks explanations for crime and violence without carefully factoring in socio-economic conditions is of special concern to those who see black youth as a targeted and endangered population. Inevitably, as the U.S. economy continues to deteriorate, the country will increasingly face organized challenges such as the Black Panthers and inchoate uprisings such as the one that shook Los Angeles in spring 1992.

Inevitably, the government will respond. Even without a formal violence initiative, other, similarly odious initiatives have already been implemented to control young urban blacks. Despite Jesse Jackson's admonition that it is more expensive to send a youth to jail than to Yale, to the state pen than to Penn State, incarceration has become the government's option of choice. In Baltimore, for example, on any given day in 1991, 56 percent of the city's African-American men ages 18-35 were in jail or in prison, on probation or parole, awaiting trial or sentencing, or being sought on warrants for their arrest. That year, of nearly 13,000 individuals arrested on drug charges in Baltimore, more than 11,000 were African-Americans. An African-American youth was 100 times more likely to be charged with the sale of drugs in Baltimore than a Euro-American youth.<sup>33</sup>

California, the most populous state, reflects the national picture. The state's prison population has more than quadrupled from 22,500 inmates at the beginning of the 1980s, to over 100,000 eleven years later. In the decade ending in 1991, California had imprisoned seven times more people than during the 30 years between 1950 and 1980. Since 1985, California prisons added more prisoners each year than they added in each average decade between 1950 and 1980. There are 40,000 more inmates in California than in all of Great Britain or Germany. A disproportionate percentage of California's inmates are African-American and Latino.<sup>34</sup> In short, rather than attacking the roots of crime by addressing socio-economic questions, the authorities have chosen to lock up a generation and throw away the key.

Mass imprisonment is supplemented by another disquieting example of institutionalizing those who cannot be controlled. *Southern Exposure* documented the disproportionate number of blacks involuntarily committed to state-run mental hospitals in the southern U.S. In 1987, nearly 37 percent of those committed against their will were black. Consistently diagnosed with more severe mental illnesses than whites, they have been subjected to heavier doses of drugs and longer hospital stays as well as (in a number of southern states), indefinite commitment without judicial review. The pattern of over-institutionalizing and over-medicating blacks, the article suggests, may not be confined to the South.<sup>35</sup>

Nor—despite the fact that the greatest weight of overt repression falls on young minority males—do women escape society's "remedies." In late 1990, an editorial in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* suggested the ghastly scenario that the 5-year contraceptive, Norplant, be implanted in black women so that what was seen as their excessive number of babies would not swell the welfare rolls. Although the editors were sufficiently squeamish to acknowledge, "All right, the subject makes us uncomfortable, too," they did not jettison the macabre idea.<sup>36</sup>

## Preventing Genocide

The U.S. faces stiffer challenges abroad not only from the so-called Third World but also from erstwhile allies in Western Europe and Japan. Simultaneously, restive minorities at home have made clear—through the fires of spring in L.A.—that they will not be recumbent in the face of massive unemployment, increased homelessness, and draconian cuts in education. Norplant, ethnic weapons, psychosurgery and the Violence Initiative are sophisticated stratagems designed to deal with these festering problems. As has happened often in the past, fundamental socio-economic questions are redefined as biomedical problems, and these in turn are redefined as stemming from defective and possibly sub-human individuals. Hence, Goodwin's references to urban youth as "monkeys."

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It is not enough for the targets to be viewed as less than human. Children as young as five years old—some of the most defenseless members of this society—are singled out for intervention. And, it is not enough for the targets to be young, they must also come from the ranks of despised and persecuted minorities. It will only be enough when minorities offer no more resistance and simply do as they are told.

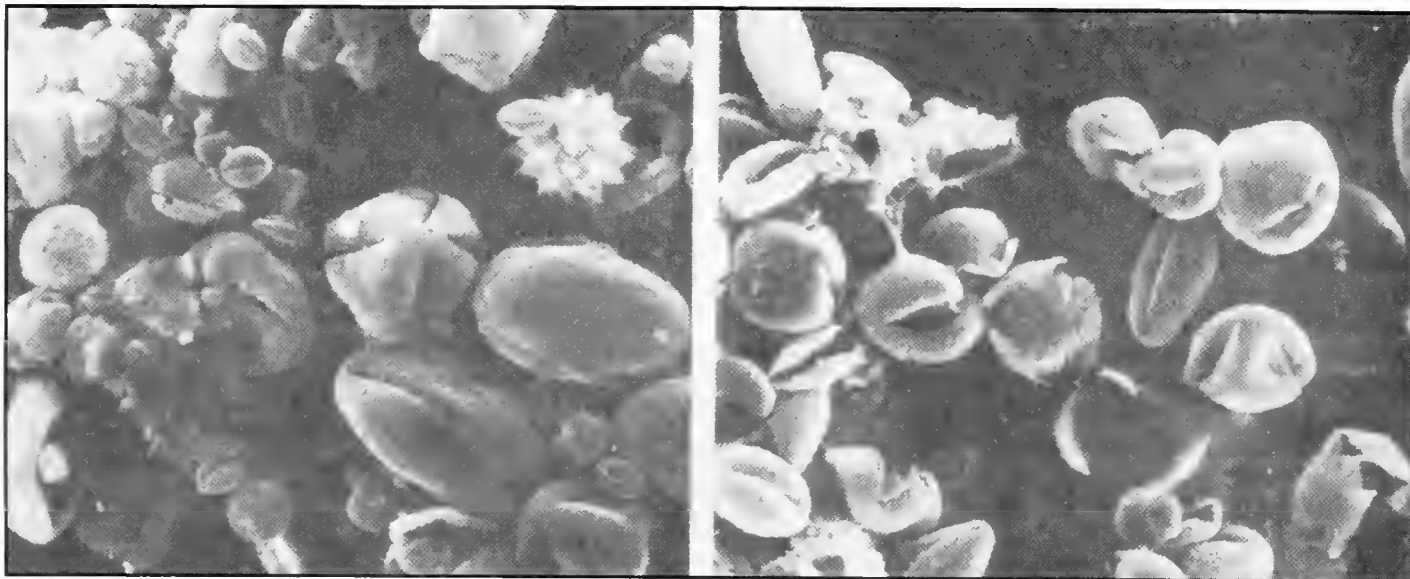
That option is as unlikely as it is intolerable. So, unless dramatic intervention by the progressive movement occurs, genocidal measures will be moved a step closer. The Violence Initiative and its progeny must be rejected, and the movement to create a more humane society must be accelerated.

33. National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, *Hobbling a Generation: Young African-American Males in the Criminal Justice System of America's Cities: Baltimore, Maryland* (Alexandria, Va., 1992).

34. Franklin Zimring and Gordon Hawkins, "Prison Population and Criminal Justice Policy in California," *California Policy Seminar Brief*, vol. 4, no. 8, August 1992, pp. 1-7.

35. David Ramm, "Over Committed," *Southern Exposure*, Fall 1989, pp. 14-17.

36. "Norplant and Poverty," December 12, 1990, p. A18.



## The *Wall Street Journal* as Propaganda Agency:

# Yellow Rain and the El Mozote Massacre

Edward S. Herman

The *Wall Street Journal* is in a sense two different newspapers: a high quality news division, and an editorial page that pushes rightwing causes and themes relentlessly, often with a blatant disregard of evidence. Occasionally the two arms of the paper come into conflict, as with *Journal* reporter Jonathan Kwitny's August 1985 series detailing the shady qualities of the Italian secret services and political culture and its U.S. connections. The articles shed unflattering light on frequent *Journal* editorial page contributor, neo-con fixer and propagandist Michael Ledeen, and his erstwhile ally, Italian spy and fixer Francesco Pazienza, who was then residing in a U.S. jail.<sup>1</sup>

Kwitny's two-part report was the first time the *Journal* had focused on some of the doubtful features of the alleged Bulgarian-KGB involvement in the May 1981 assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II. Previously, the editorial page ran numerous articles supporting the alleged connection,

with Claire Sterling as favored contributor and Gordon (the "Crowbar") Crovitz, the inside hatchet person. It had also pushed the line that Italian politics and police operations were clean as a whistle. "Mind you," wrote Suzanne Garment in an editorial page article about the Italian government's decision to prosecute the Bulgarians, "this is the Italians—no American hawk paranoids but instead people who live with a new government every thirty days. You simply cannot doubt their word."<sup>2</sup> The P-2 scandal was ignored in editorial page commentaries to preserve the vision of a wholesome Italy.<sup>3</sup> Kwitny's critical facts on Pazienza and other unpleasant types, which he linked to editorial favorite Ledeen, were painful, and Ledeen and Sterling were given generous letter space to rebut Kwitny. The editors took some cracks at him as well.

Edward S. Herman is an economist and media analyst. His most recent book is *Beyond Hypocrisy: Decoding News in the Age of Propaganda* (Boston: South End Press, 1992). Photo: Electron micrographs of pollen (left) in State Department sample of "Yellow Rain" and bee excrement (right) collected off a car in Cambridge, Mass. Five Harvard scientists cited these samples in a report to the American Academy of Scientists. *Southeast Asia Chronicle*.

1. "Tales of Intrigue: How an Italian Ex-Spy, Who Also Helped U.S. Landed in Prison Here," August 7, 1985; "Why Italian Ex-spy Francesco Pazienza Got Closely Involved in the Billygate Affair," August 8, 1985.

2. June 15, 1984. The logic by which rapid government turnover makes for wisdom is not obvious. Garment does not mention that virtually all of those governments were run by the Christian Democrats. Nor does she mention that the Italian state had been heavily penetrated and manipulated by the U.S. secret services and military, as the 1991 Gladio exposures further revealed. For the corrupt political background of the case against the Bulgarians in Italy, see Edward Herman and Frank Brodhead, *The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection* (New York: Sheridan Square, 1986), chap. 4.

3. The P-2 scandal disclosed the existence of a parallel government run by the right-wing Masonic Lodge, P-2 (*Propaganda Due*), which had deeply penetrated the Italian political system and posed the threat of a right-wing coup in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

## Purging the Editorial Page

For some years the editorial page ran periodic columns by Alexander Cockburn, Hodding Carter III, Arthur Schlesinger, and Walter Heller, giving readers at least occasional relief from the otherwise incessant barrage of right-wing opinion and propaganda. But the ending of the Cold War brought this system to an end, and the editorial page has become much freer from the taint of any alternative points of view.<sup>4</sup>

In a way, however, the news and editorial page do complement one another rather well. The function of the news pages is to provide reliable information on matters relevant to the *Journal's* readership. Ideological corruption would undermine the performance of this function, and it is mainly on issues like "terrorism" that the news department allows ideology to submerge the world of reality.<sup>5</sup> The news reporters are exceptionally free to examine the seamy sides of the corporate and political system, and have exposed many important cases of corporate and political malpractice, conflicts of interest, and abuses of regulation arising out of business influence. The paper is powerful enough to be able to ignore complaints of corporations and government officials being criticized that would render lesser papers more careful or altogether silent. It is surely helped in this by the fact that it can point to a solidly reactionary editorial page, which supports an unfettered capitalism and each and every imperialist venture.

The editorial page serves other functions as well. It offers an open forum and testing ground for right-wing opinion, providing readers with rationales for supply side economics, monetarism, capital gains tax reductions, deregulation, the death penalty, generosity to police and prisons, Salvadoran and Guatemalan death squads, Pinochet, Fujimori, Savimbi, etc. It also supports state and right-wing agendas by the aggressive espousal and dissemination of each new propaganda theme. Thus it pursued with ideological fervor every major Reaganite policy thrust and claim of the 1980s, including supply side tax cuts, trashing the poor, the Soviet threat and arms buildup, Marxism-Leninism in

Central America, Salvadoran guerrilla and Sandinista terrorism, the Bulgarian-KGB attempt to assassinate the Pope, and Yellow Rain.

Finally, the editors have also helped to discipline and contain critics of the approved views. The editorial page has been a flak machine, but unlike Accuracy in Media, it operates from *within* the mainstream media itself. This function is performed in part by the sheer aggressiveness and self-assurance of the editorial proclamation of the higher truths (i.e., state propaganda claims). But the editors also launched attacks in the Reagan years in parallel with those of the government, on human rights groups like Americas Watch and Amnesty International, that were too critical of the Guatemalan government in 1981-82, or against reporters like Raymond Bonner and Alma Guillermoprieto, who claimed mass killings by the Salvadoran army in El Mozote in 1982, which were denied by the administration, as described below.

## Yellow Rain

The *Wall Street Journal's* service as a propaganda arm of the state reached its zenith in its handling of the Reagan administration's 1981 to 1986 propaganda campaign which claimed that the Soviet Union and its allies in Laos and Cambodia were targeting local insurgents with chemical poisons that came to be known as Yellow Rain. In an unusual admission, the principal *Journal* editorial writer on Yellow Rain, William Kucewicz, acknowledged that the *Journal* had responded to an appeal by the administration to support this "cause":

...some people in government—in the administration—contacted us [after the press put Yellow Rain on the back burner] and said, "Gee, can't you guys keep this going, because it is a vital issue." After we saw how extensive this was and what it meant for the future of arms control and how inhumane these types of weapons were, we decided to take this on as a cause.<sup>6</sup>

The *Journal's* pursuit of the Yellow Rain campaign was confined almost entirely to its editorial page, where coverage of the issue was intensive, hysterical, uncompromisingly biased, and unbending in the face of the complete collapse of the evidence. The editors were still operating as if these confuted claims were true in 1992.

4. Following the new homogenization, the present writer sent a tongue-in-cheek letter to the editor proposing, in the name of freedom of choice, that the paper decouple the news and editorial pages, allowing those who want only news or right-wing propaganda to buy it without the previously tied-in offering. It was pointed out, also, that with a spun off editorial page there would be so much more room for coverage of the opinions of Oliver North, Jonas Savimbi, Hector Gramajo, Augusto Pinochet, Alfredo Cristiani, Richard Perle, Dinesh D'Souza, Jude Wanniski, and the other true blue doers and thinkers of the world. The editors didn't think well of my plan for enlarging free choice.

5. The *Journal* is no different from other mainstream papers in this respect; on terrorism, the "privileged definitions" of the state conquer all. See Edward Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan, *The "Terrorism" Industry* (New York: Pantheon, 1990), chapt. 7.

6. Quoted from a 1986 article in the *Technology Review* by Thomas Whiteside, "Annals of the Cold War: The Yellow Rain Complex-II," *The New Yorker*, February 18, 1990, p. 48. Hereafter, Whiteside—II.



Roger Rumpf

**Hmong women pass U.S. bomb. Given their history, they are likely to blame enemy attack for unexplained illness.**

### Background

Charges of chemical warfare and the use of poison gas in Laos originated in the mid-1970s, based largely on claims of certain Hmong tribespeople who were refugees in Thailand. The charges escalated in 1978-79, as the State Department and Pentagon dispatched teams to interview refugees, and the press and right wing latched on to these claims to push their own agendas. The official position was that the evidence, while disturbing and justifying further inquiry, was only circumstantial.

Under Reagan, the circumstantial evidence became definitive truth. Secretary of State Alexander Haig stated in a speech in Berlin on September 13, 1981, "we now have physical evidence from Southeast Asia which has been analyzed and found to contain abnormally high levels of three potent mycotoxins—poisonous substances not indigenous to the region and which are highly toxic to man and animals." Richard Burt and other officials claimed that the symptoms suffered by the victims were precisely what such poisons would produce—"the fit was perfect," said Burt. The

physical evidence consisted of a single leaf and stem, purportedly from Cambodia, furnished by a Thai military officer to the U. S. Embassy. No control sample of leaves was obtained, nor were the original tests verified by an independent check. The claim that such mycotoxins—also referred to as trichothecenes—were not indigenous to the area was not checked out, and turned out to be false. The same was true of the allegation that the symptoms of the victims were a "perfect fit."

It should be recalled that this was the same administration that: fabricated in 1981 the story that a Libyan "hit squad" was after Reagan; that charged in 1981-82 (as suggested by Claire Sterling, but rejected by the CIA's own professionals) that the Soviet Union was the organizing force of world terrorism;<sup>8</sup> that supported in 1982-86 the Sterling-Henze claims of the Bulgarian-KGB involvement in the shooting of the Pope in 1981; and that asserted in 1983 that the Soviet Union knowingly shot down the civilian airliner KAL 007, when in fact the administration *knew* that this was not the case.<sup>9</sup> In other words, this was a government for which deliberate lying as an instrument of political ends was not "second nature," it was a primary *modus operandi*.

From 1981 on, it was U.S. policy to vilify the Soviet Union by any means, fair or foul. The Yellow Rain charge had the additional merit that the chemical warfare lobby had suffered a setback in the post-Vietnam War environment and was aggressively seeking to enlarge its domain in the late 1970s.<sup>10</sup> In the Reagan years, the lobby obtained the support of the executive branch, which saw Yellow Rain as an effective tool to restore chemical weapons development "to counter the perceived Soviet threat."<sup>11</sup> The administration engaged in intensive lobbying to get congressional authorization and funding for the full-scale production of new binary nerve-gas munitions.<sup>12</sup> It pressed its European allies to condemn the Soviets and to agree to repair Western chemical weapons deficiencies, claiming that a Soviet surprise attack could breach NATO defenses and allow Soviet victory.<sup>13</sup> There were the usual claims that the Western governments were aware or had evidence of Soviet guilt in the use of Yellow Rain, but were "politically constrained" in exposing them. (Actually, the constraints worked the other way: As discussed below, the British government sat for years on evidence casting doubt on the Yellow Rain evidence.)

8. When presented with the Sterling thesis by Ray Cline at the 1980 meeting of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, the recently retired CIA Moscow station chief, Howard Bane, said: "We've got to get Cline off this Moscow control of terrorists. It's divisive. It's not true. There's not a single word of truth in it." Retired CIA officer Harry Rositzke said: "It's that far right stuff, that's all. It's horseshit." (Quoted in Jcff Stein, "Old Spies and Cold Peas," *Inquiry*, December 29, 1980.) These CIA men weren't aware that this "horseshit" was about to become official doctrine.

9. The *New York Times* finally acknowledged this lie in an editorial entitled "The Lie That Wasn't Shot Down," January 18, 1988. It found no fault in its own uncritical acceptance of the story..

10. Whiteside I, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-46.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

7. See Thomas Whiteside, "Annals of the Cold War: The Yellow Rain Complex-I," *The New Yorker*, February 11, 1990, pp. 44ff. Hereafter Whiteside—I.



## The Case Disintegrates

In Laos from 1962 to 1975, the CIA ran a "secret war" using the Hmong tribespeople as its proxy army. After that war, some Hmong fought the Lao government for years and were attacked periodically by ground and air fire. Even earlier, back in 1964, Kampuchea had charged in the U.N. Security Council that the United States and South Vietnam had dropped yellow powder on villages, killing residents. In the early 1970s, the Hmong reported that U.S. spraying of their poppy fields with herbicides had resulted in human deaths. "So in both Kampuchea and Laos there is a collective history of aerial spraying and, perhaps, a basis for present day rumors."<sup>14</sup> It is not impossible that the Hmong had been attacked subsequently by planes dropping CS gas and defoliants, which the Vietnamese had inherited from the departed U.S. forces. Even this possibility, however, has not been proven and of course any tie-in of Vietnamese or Laotian Yellow Rain attacks with prior U.S. policy in Indochina is avoided by the Western propaganda system.

Given Hmong experience and fears they would be inclined to blame their ills on enemy attacks, and certainly with urging would tend to provide derogatory testimony against the enemy. There is also precedent for confusing a natural phenomenon with a chemical attack. Harvard biochemist Matthew Meselson uncovered a 1977 Chinese scientific article which gave an account of what peasants in Jiangsu province called Yellow Rain, which aroused fear of poisoning from the air, and led to an investigation which found that the rain was bee feces. The Hmong would have more reason than the Chinese to fear poison from the air and attribute their sicknesses to Yellow Rain dropped by enemy forces.

There is also evidence that many of the early Hmong witnesses were asked leading questions, were interrogated lightly, and were given a line to follow by their military leaders. When independent investigators and U.S. Army and State Department follow-up teams questioned the refugees more rigorously, the stories turned out to be almost entirely hearsay, full of contradictions, and inconsistent over time.<sup>15</sup>

It is notable that no material evidence supporting Yellow Rain attacks—artillery shells, bombs or bomb fragments, or containers—was ever provided.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, "At no time, then or later, was any case documented in which diagnostic

examination or autopsy provided clear evidence of exposure to chemical warfare agents."<sup>17</sup> The medical investigators of the Defense-State Department CBW team visited a dozen suspected chemical warfare attack sites reported to them, "but none yielded confirmatory evidence."<sup>18</sup>

The Haig-Burt team's claim of a "perfect fit" between symptoms reported and the known toxic effects of the trichothecenes did not hold up either. Defense and State Department medical interviews found that "only two of the 60 alleged witnesses interviewed reported that particular constellation of symptoms. Over time this ratio did not increase. In a total of 217 interviews accumulated by 1984, only 5 matched the constellation of medical symptoms described in the Haig report."<sup>19</sup>

*The Collapse of the Scientific Case.* The scientific quality of the Reagan administration's case was negligible from its inception. The single leaf-stem sample first employed was provided by a Thai military officer. That sample and three others showed only minute traces of trichothecenes. Eventually it was demonstrated that over 99 percent of the contaminants of such leaves was pollen in feces dropped by honey bees. This evidence raised the question of how the Soviets and their clients had managed to get toxins linked to bee droppings. Although the difficulty was usually evaded, the administration claimed at one point that the pollen had been commercially prepared by the Soviets "to help ensure the retention of toxins in the human body."<sup>20</sup> There was no evidence offered in support of this claim, and the absurdity of the Soviets manufacturing and collecting bee feces in order to cover up a toxin, which was itself hard to make and an inefficient weapon, was obvious.

The scientific case also broke down as more rigorous testing procedures were applied to leaf samples from Southeast Asia. The early confirmations of trichothecenes in the original leaf samples were done by rudimentary methods at Fort Detrick, Maryland, and a laboratory in Minnesota. After the Army's acquisition of more advanced testing facilities at its Chemical Systems Laboratory, it ran tests on 80 samples from alleged attacks in Southeast Asia, including one reported by the Minnesota laboratory to contain trichothecenes. The Chemical Systems Laboratory found no trichothecenes in any of the 80 samples.<sup>21</sup> Another large testing operation on samples of vegetation and blood and urine of victims of alleged chemical attacks was carried out at the British government laboratory at Porton Down in 1982. The findings were kept under cover until May 1986, when the government finally reported that no trace of trichothecenes was found in any of the samples.<sup>22</sup>

Very low levels of trichothecenes were occasionally found in bee feces samples from Thailand and elsewhere. A Canadi-

14. Lois Ember, "Yellow Rain," *Chemical & Engineering News*, January 9, 1984, pp. 24-25.

15. "Documents recently declassified show that when the Defense-State CBW team began to address these matters, it discovered serious problems with the reliability of the previous interviews." Julian Robinson, Jeanne Guillemin, and Matthew Meselson, "Yellow Rain: The Story Collapses," *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1987, p. 113. Among independent investigators, see especially, Grant Evans, *The Yellow Rainmakers* (London: Verso, 1983); Jacqui Chagnon and Roger Rumpf, "Search for 'Yellow Rain'," *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, June 1983; and Louis Wolf, "Yellow Rain Fabrication," *CAIB*, Number 17 (Summer 1982), pp. 8-13.

16. One possible exception is a piece of plastic bag allegedly found at Ban Sa Tong, which tested positive for trichothecenes, but which Canadian investigators treated with great caution as of uncertain authenticity, given that it was supplied them by others. The *Journal's* William Kucewicz treated this—like anything else supporting his case—as authentic and conclusive evidence. The possible doctoring of evidence never occurred to him for any claim supporting the preferred conclusion. ("Yellow Rain Confirmed," August 25, 1986.)

17. Robinson, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-15.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

19. *Ibid.*

20. This was stated by Kenneth Adelman, in Whiteside I, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

21. Robinson *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

an government report, however, indicated that the tiny quantities of trichothecenes found in such samples were "comparable to the levels found worldwide for natural occurrences of trichothecenes on stored cereals."<sup>23</sup> These levels also showed up in Thai blood test samples of people not experiencing any chemical attacks. In short, they were levels that could be explained by natural processes.

The final scientific blow was the finding that trichothecenes were produced naturally in Southeast Asia. In August 1985, Canadian government investigators "reported that a leaf sample collected at the site of the Ban Sa Tong episode was found to have a trichothecene-producing mold on it."<sup>24</sup> In 1987, British government scientists at Porton Down reported the natural occurrence of trichothecenes in samples of food crops from Thailand. The U.S. claim that these toxins were not indigenous to Southeast Asia was proven false. The case was dead, but not for the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*.

### The Role of the *Wall Street Journal*

The *Wall Street Journal's* editorial pages served as a virtual publicity agent for the Reagan administration during the Yellow Rain controversy. The chief editorial writer on the subject acknowledged as much, stating that the editors took this on as a "cause" after an appeal by the administration to keep this vital issue alive. The ensuing editorials all served the propaganda function in two important respects: they accepted the claims of the state at face value as a higher truth, and they pressed hard the larger themes that the state wanted to promote: that the Soviet Union was an insidious, cruel enemy not to be trusted; that arms control agreements with them were suspect; and that U.S. CB warfare operations needed drastic enlargement.<sup>25</sup>

*Hypocrisy (1): Editorial Concern for the "Helpless People."* The editors of the *Journal* waxed eloquent and furious over the use of such a cruel weapon as Yellow Rain against a "helpless people," an "unsophisticated and defense-less people." They frequently expressed horror at the "ghastliness" of such weaponry, and "children choking on their own blood."<sup>26</sup> This was the same editorial board that had accepted with great equanimity the U.S. use of napalm, phosphorus bombs, CS-2 gas, and the massive chemical defoliation of peasant crops and forests in South Vietnam. That was the largest scale application of chemical warfare since World War I, and the victims were peasants without medical resources or means of defense against technological warfare by a great industrial power. We will see below, also, that the only thing about the mass killing of men, women and children in Central America that bothered the editors was that U.S. reporters gave credence to the claims of such unworthy victims.

In the numerous *Journal* editorial page discussions of Yellow Rain from 1981 to 1986, the background of U.S. chemical warfare in Indochina was unmentioned. In a September 9, 1992, article by *Journal* publisher Peter Kann, entitled "Clinton Ignores History's Lessons In Vietnam," in explaining our superior moral position in the Vietnam War, Kann cites "the poisoned fields of Laos" as relevant to "who were the good guys and who were the bad guys." The vastly larger U.S. chemical war in Vietnam is blanked out, but the "poison" in Laos (his term for Yellow Rain), is still front and center. The discredited myth proves enemy evil; the U.S. chemical war is written out of history, and the U.S. remains the benevolent Uncle. Could Stalinist historiography surpass this?

*Hypocrisy (2): The Bias of Anybody Who Contests the Propaganda Line.* In an even more remarkable display of hypocrisy, the editors of the *Journal* expressed great indignation over the alleged personal-political biases of the investigators and scientists who were undermining the Yellow Rain case in the years 1982-86. Scientists who merely failed to confirm the Yellow Rain claims were largely ignored. But Grant Evans, an Australian anthropologist who cast severe doubts on the reliability of Hmong refugee accounts, was red-baited (February 15, 1984), and the *Journal* editors castigated Meselson, who wrote extensively on the subject, for having a "personal and intellectual stake in the issue." They also tried to discredit an outstanding and critical review article by Lois Ember in the *Chemical & Engineering News* by suggesting that one of 64 sources cited was biased.<sup>27</sup>

In short, those who agreed with the editors were good guys. Only the motives of the bad guys needed to be examined. The effect was sometimes funny. One of the editors' favorite scientists was Professor Aubin Heyndrickx, a toxicologist at the University of Ghent in Belgium, who explained that he was not political and had no political axe to grind in his support of the Yellow Rain hypothesis; his only concern "is protecting freedom and human rights from the totalitarians." Furthermore, the accusations against his research "are the usual aggressive tactics of the Soviet bloc."<sup>28</sup> Clearly, this was an objective scientist.

*The Preferential Method.* Throughout the 1980s, the *Journal's* editors dealt with the evidence on Yellow Rain by the "preferential method" of research: *i.e.*, select the findings that fit and are preferred; ignore, distort or sneer at conflicting evidence. On the question of refugee testimony and its reliability, the editors never once analyzed the problems that eventually led the Pentagon-State Department CW team to raise real doubts about this evidence. The preferential method led the editors of the *Journal* to fail to mention this material, even though from an official source. The inability of official investigators in 1983-84 to confirm the presence of

(Continued on p. 62)

23. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

24. *Ibid.*

25. This was spelled out most clearly in the editorial "Yellow Rain & Arms Control," September 21, 1981.

26. See *ibid.*; also, "Anyone Serious?," November 13, 1981.

27. Ember, *op. cit.* The *Journal* editorials were "Science and Windmills," February 15, 1984; and "Who Speaks for Science?," November 4, 1985.

28. Gordon Crovitz, "Belgian Keeps Faith With 'Yellow Rain' Victims," February 15, 1984.

# Germany, U.S., and the Yugoslav Crisis

Sean Gervasi



## The Civil War As Lethal Shadow Play

The horrors in the Balkan region displayed daily on television and in the newspapers show a country apparently torn apart by civil war. But what lies behind images of gaunt refugees, artillery duels, blood-spattered walls, combat patrols and devastated towns and villages? The only answer that most of us can give is that it is the struggle of Yugoslav against Yugoslav, of Croats against Slovenes and Serbs, of Muslims against Serbs, and of Serbs against all of the others.

That is what the mass media have been telling us, and that is all they have been telling us. There are, however, other forces at work in the Yugoslav crisis beyond ethnic tensions. Yugoslavia has for some time been the target of a covert policy waged by the West and its allies, primarily Germany, the United States, Britain, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, as well as by Iran, to divide Yugoslavia into its ethnic components, dismantle it, and eventually recolonize it. Not that, given hundreds of years of hatred and tension, that is a particularly difficult job. After all, the term Balkanization entered the political vocabulary to define a process of national fragmentation and fratricidal war. But while the internal dynamics of the war are well documented, the external forces of destabilization which were put into high gear years ago have received scant attention.

The basic issues in Yugoslavia have always been independence and economics. Yugoslavia has been at the center of a tug of war. The Soviets sought its incorporation into the USSR; the West has tried to pull Yugoslavia—along with

other countries of Eastern Europe and the Balkans—"into Europe," that is, into the capitalist world economy.

To this end, the West has promoted de-industrialization and dependence and unleashed an arsenal of modern power including threats and pressure, a U.N.-sanctioned economic blockade, and covert arms shipments. Under Marshall Josip Tito's leadership, Yugoslavia established its independence from Moscow and formed a *de facto* alliance with the West and NATO. By the end of 1990, however, while Eastern Europe was well on the way to European integration—and economic crisis—Yugoslavia began to suspend the "reforms" to which it had initially agreed. That resistance brought down the wrath of certain Western powers, which then sought to break Yugoslavia by promoting separatism and igniting the ethnic tensions that had haunted the country for centuries.

### Yugoslavia and the Reagan Doctrine

Since World War II, Yugoslavia—prized by both sides—has been molded by the forces of Cold War.

Early in the first Reagan administration, the U.S. escalated the Cold War with an aggressive, secret strategy to undercut the Soviet economy, destabilize the USSR, and ultimately bring about the collapse of Communism.<sup>1</sup> In 1985, then-Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick dubbed this new strategy, which went well beyond containment, "the Reagan Doctrine."<sup>2</sup>

At about the same time, according to recently declassified documents obtained by *CovertAction*, the U.S. adopted a

Sean Gervasi is research professor at the Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, Yugoslavia, from where he recently returned. He was a consultant to the U.N. (1969-84) and professor of Economics, University of Paris. Photo: Donna Binder/Impact Visuals, Croatia. Women, by home, after mortar attack.

1. See Sean Gervasi, "The Destabilization of the Soviet Union," *Covert Action*, Number 35 (Fall 1990) and Sean Gervasi, "Western Intervention in the USSR," *CovertAction*, Number 39 (Winter 1991-92).

2. Jeane Kirkpatrick, "The Reagan Doctrine and U.S. Foreign Policy," The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1985, p. 5.

similar strategy toward the countries of Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia. In September 1982, when the region seemed stable and the Berlin Wall had seven years to stand, the U.S. drew up National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 54, "United States Policy toward Eastern Europe." Labeled SECRET and declassified with light censorship in 1990,<sup>3</sup> it called for greatly expanded efforts to promote a "quiet revolution" to overthrow Communist governments and parties. While naming all the countries of Eastern Europe, it omitted mention of Yugoslavia.



T. Hornbak/Impact Visuals

Tank from the Federal Army in the village of Okucani, Croatia.

In March 1984, a separate document, NSDD 133, "United States Policy toward Yugoslavia," was adopted and given the even more restricted classification: SECRET SENSITIVE. When finally declassified in 1990, NSDD 133 was still highly censored, with less than two-thirds of the original text remaining.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, taken together, the two documents reveal a consistent policy logic.

The "primary long-term U.S. goal in Eastern Europe" as described explicitly in NSDD 54 was "to [censored...] facilitate its eventual re-integration into the European community of nations."<sup>5</sup>

Since the Eastern European states could not have been "reintegrated" into "the European community of nations" as long as they remained under Communist rule, the basic U.S. goal required removal of Communist governments. The implication of ending Soviet influence extends to the more cautiously worded remnants of NSDD 133. The goal of "U.S. Policy [toward Yugoslavia]," it states, "will be to promote the trend toward an effective, market-oriented Yugoslav economic structure...[and] to expand U.S. economic relations

with Yugoslavia in ways which benefit both countries and which strengthen Yugoslavia's ties with the industrialized democracies."<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the basic U.S. objective for Yugoslavia was much the same as for Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Poland and Romania: a capitalist transformation. The list of policy instruments described in NSDD 54 to promote change in Eastern Europe may help fill in some gaps in the more highly censored Yugoslavia-specific NSDD 133. The mechanisms included most-favored-nation status, credit

policy, IMF stewardship, debt rescheduling, cultural and educational exchanges, information programs, high-level visits, and restrictions on diplomatic and consular personnel.<sup>7</sup> Even in this document, some items were completely or partially deleted in the declassified version.

Today, the revelations in the two documents may seem banal. It should be remembered, however, that for many years, the government felt the need to keep secret even the more overt means of pressuring for change. Furthermore, significant parts of U.S. policy in the region, particularly in Yugoslavia, remain secret even today. Covert policies, which undoubtedly were implemented, are not usually discussed at any length in a National Security Decision Directive.

### The U.S. and Yugoslavia's Internal Crisis

The existence of a separate document for Yugoslavia reflects that nation's special relationship with the U.S. After Yugoslavia left the Warsaw Pact in 1948 over disagreements with Stalin, the West saw it as a buffer state against Soviet expansionism. When the Soviet Union made threats against it in the early 1950s, Yugoslavia asked the U.S. for help and quietly undertook "certain military obligations" towards the West in the event of a conflict with the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> The agreement included a commitment to "protect northern Italy from penetration by Soviet troops based in Hungary."<sup>9</sup> According to a knowledgeable Yugoslav analyst, this "alliance with the West," along with expanded educational, diplomatic and commercial ties, "forced Yugoslav Communists to open up to Western cultural and political influences."<sup>10</sup>

During the post-war years, Western aid—amounting to several hundred billions of dollars, most of which came from the U.S.—helped to create a boom in Yugoslavia. And, although Yugoslavia remained poorer than most of the countries of the industrialized West, the relatively equitable distribution of the fruits of industrialization carried much of the country out of poverty. By the end of the 1980s, Yugoslavs

3. National Security Decision Directive 54, "United States Policy Toward Eastern Europe," SECRET, the White House, Washington, September 2, 1982.

4. National Security Decision Directive 133, "United States Policy Toward Yugoslavia," SECRET SENSITIVE, the White House, Washington, March 14, 1984. The SECRET SENSITIVE classification indicates that a significant amount of the information was based on intercepted communications or revealed the existence of confidential relationships with Yugoslav citizens or organizations.

5. NSDD 54, p. 1.

6. NSDD 133, p. 1.

7. NSDD 54, pp. 3-4.

8. Predrag Simic, "Yugoslavia: Origins of the Crisis," *Southeastern European Yearbook 1991*, Hellenic Foundation for Defense and Foreign Policy, 1992, p. 109.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

were better off than most people in Portugal, Spain, Turkey, and parts of Greece. That economic success was crucial in diminishing regional and ethnic tensions.

Thus, the Yugoslav socialist experiment was generally viewed as successful, even in the West, both for its economic progress and for the unity which Marshall Tito brought to an ethnically diverse state.

Yugoslav planners, however, strove to combine structural change with rapid economic growth. And that policy was costly; it created a large trade deficit and weakened the country's currency. The oil crises of 1973-74 and 1979 exacerbated Yugoslavia's problems.<sup>11</sup> By the early 1980s, the country faced serious balance of payments problems and rising inflation. As usual, the IMF, in the name of financial rectitude, stepped in and prodded the Yugoslav authorities to slow growth, restrict credit, cut social expenditures, and devalue the dinar. Although the trade deficit was reduced and the balance of payments showed a record surplus by 1979,<sup>12</sup> the IMF "reforms" wreaked economic and political havoc. Slower growth, the accumulation of foreign debt—and especially the cost of servicing it—as well as devaluation, led to a fall in the standard of living of the average Yugoslav.

The economic crisis threatened political stability. Not only did the declining standard of living undermine the authority of the country's leaders, it also threatened to aggravate simmering ethnic tensions.

The 1980 death of Marshall Tito—the one leader whose authority could hold the country together—plunged Yugoslavia into a dual crisis. And without leadership, the economic crisis suddenly became more difficult to resolve.

Moreover, since Yugoslavia was linked to the world capitalist economy, it had suffered the same economic stagnation that affected Western Europe and North America during the 1970s. When the Reagan administration's supply-side economic policies precipitated a recession in 1981-83, the effects were felt everywhere, not least in Yugoslavia.

It is hardly surprising that Yugoslav planners found it difficult to arrest economic decline in their own country. Some observers claimed that the inability of the economic system to respond to the 1980s crisis demonstrated the failure of the Yugoslav model of socialism. While there is some truth to the charge that the system was rigid, Yugoslavia's troubles were caused first and foremost by the transmission of the Western economic crisis to those countries on the edge of Europe which were closely linked to the West by aid, trade, capital flows, and emigration.

The uneasy U.S.-Yugoslav alliance persisted through the 1980s. Because of Yugoslavia's unique "buffer" position, the U.S. had a special stake in its stability. Despite discomfort



Teun Voeten/Impact Visuals

**Soldiers of far-right Croatian Rights Party wearing Nazi Iron Cross, 1992.**

with its communist "ally," the new Reagan administration preserved the relationship, hoping to benefit from the developing instability in Yugoslavia in order to install a more amenable government.

In the late 1980s, three factors suddenly altered the dynamics of the U.S.-Yugoslav relationship. Yugoslavia began to suspend its market-oriented "reforms." The Cold War ended and Yugoslavia was no longer so useful. And a newly united Germany, staking out a larger role for itself in Europe, demanded that the Bush administration adopt the German policy of working for the "dissociation," that is, the dismantling, of Yugoslavia.

### **Diplomatic Coercion and Reform in the East**

The summer before the Berlin Wall fell, the major Western powers decided in Paris to press the emerging East European governments to establish "democracies" and market economies.<sup>13</sup> This goal was advanced by the 1990 elections throughout Eastern Europe, which produced broad support for non-Communist governments seeking to implement precisely the kinds of "reforms"<sup>14</sup> which the U.S. and its European partners had hoped for and worked toward.

In an exercise more in coercive diplomacy than in persuasion, the Western powers determined to offer aid and trade only to those countries that agreed to market-oriented structural and policy changes. Furthermore, noted Richard Portes, chief economic adviser to the European Community (EC), the West must "build in ways of committing the authorities not to deviate from their basic policies." To this end, planners demanded four major and irreversible "reforms" in Eastern Europe: an opening to the world economy, *i.e.*, to the Western

11. "Eastern Europe and the USSR," Economist Intelligence Unit, London, June 1990, p. 212.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-10.

13. See Peter Gowan, "Old Medicine in New Bottles: Western Policy Toward East Central Europe," *World Policy Journal*, Winter 1991-92, p. 4.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-33.





E. Carrechio/Impact Visuals

Beggar outside Prishtiwie, Kosovo, mosque.

system; the liberalization of prices; privatization; and stabilization of state finances and national currencies. These "reforms," argued Portes, should mark "a definitive exit from the socialist planned economy."<sup>15</sup>

The governments of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland acceded almost completely, while Bulgaria and Romania complied in part. Only two years later, the northern tier countries of Eastern Europe were

in the throes of a deep economic depression....[T]urmoil and starvation stalk the Balkans, social crisis and wild political swings plague Poland, nationalism threatens to tear apart Czechoslovakia, and social discontent in Hungary has led to a virtual boycott of existing political parties. Quasi-fascist movements have emerged on the far right, while the governments of the region have all considered initiatives to restrict civil rights.<sup>16</sup>

### Yugoslavia Steps Out of Line

A crucial change in Yugoslav relations with the West occurred when Yugoslavia balked at carrying out the reforms urged by the West. As Yugoslavia had initiated market-oriented policies before any of the countries in the former Eastern bloc—tasting some of the bitter consequences—its halting of "reforms" in 1990 particularly rankled the U.S. The Bush administration set out to force the recalcitrant nation to accede to Western demands for a "change in regime."<sup>17</sup>

In January 1989, when Ante Marcovic was named federation premier, the U.S. had anticipated a cooperative relation-

ship. "Known to favor market-oriented reforms,"<sup>18</sup> the new Prime Minister was described by the BBC correspondent as "Washington's best ally in Yugoslavia."<sup>19</sup>

In Autumn 1989, just before the Berlin Wall fell, Marcovic visited Bush in the White House. The president, the *New York Times* reported, "welcomed Mr. Marcovic's commitment to market-oriented economic reform and to building democratic pluralism." In this friendly atmosphere, Marcovic asked for "United States assistance in making economic and political changes opposed by hard-liners in the Communist Party." He requested a substantial aid package from the U.S., including \$1 billion to prop up the banking system and more than \$3 billion in loans from the World Bank. He also tried to lure private investment to his country. In exchange, Marcovic promised "reforms," but warned, as the *Times* put it, that they "are bound to bring social problems [including] an increase in unemployment to about 20 percent and the threat of increased ethnic and political tensions among the country's six republics and two autonomous provinces."<sup>20</sup>

Marcovic's new austerity plan, announced two months later in Belgrade, deepened the Yugoslav crisis. The plan called for a new devalued currency, a six-month wage freeze, closure of "unprofitable" state enterprises, and reduced government expenditure. Believing it would lead to social unrest, Serbia, the largest republic, immediately rejected it. Some 650,000 Serbian workers staged a walkout in protest.<sup>21</sup>

Marcovic's proposal for some first steps toward political democratization—a multi-party system and open elections—fared a bit better and, in January 1990, was accepted by the Central Committee of the Yugoslav League of Communists. Not long afterward, however, the Slovene League of Communists seceded from the Yugoslav League. In April, Demos, the Slovene opposition coalition, described in the U.S. as "an alliance of pro-Western parties,"<sup>22</sup> won a majority in parliamentary elections in Slovenia.

Thus, as the unity of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia weakened, a pro-Western, pro-"reform" camp consolidated and pushed for separatism as the only possible way to realize nationalist aims—which would shatter the Yugoslav economy.

By June 1990, when Prime Minister Marcovic introduced the second phase of his austerity program, industrial output in Yugoslavia had already fallen some ten percent since the beginning of the year, in part as a result of the measures introduced the previous October. Nonetheless, the second phase of the prime minister's plan called for further reductions of 18 percent in public spending, the wholesale privatization of state enterprises, and the establishment of new private property rights. To make the package more palatable, Marcovic also proposed lowering interest rates and conditionally lifting the wage freeze.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

17. Academics and bureaucrats concerned with developments in the former Socialist bloc use this term to describe fundamental political change. In practice, it refers to the capitalist transformation of Communist societies.

18. *Facts on File*, January 27, 1989, p. 57.

19. Misha Glenny, "The Massacre of Yugoslavia," *New York Review of Books*, January 30, 1992, p. 34.

20. "Yugoslav Premier Seeks U.S. Aid," *New York Times*, October 14, 1989.

21. *Facts on File*, December 31, 1989, p. 985.

22. *Facts on File*, April 20, 1990, p. 291.

Economic "reform" was the crucial issue in 1990 multi-party elections held throughout Yugoslavia. In Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, separatist coalitions ousted the League of Communists. In Serbia and Montenegro, the ruling party—renamed the Socialist Party in Serbia—won. The federal government, including Prime Minister Marcovic, denounced the separatist tendencies of the two northern republics. President Borisav Jovic resigned as federal president when his proposal for a national state of emergency was rejected.<sup>23</sup>

The line was drawn. The new separatist governments in the north wished—at least in the flush of their electoral victories—to join Europe and the parade toward capitalism. The federal government and some of the republics, including Serbia, balked. One European scholar summarized the West's view:

With the ending of the Cold War ...Yugoslavia was no longer [a] problem of global importance for the two super-powers....The important factor was the pace of reforms in the East. What lasted nine months in Poland, took only nine weeks in the GDR and only nine days in Czechoslovakia. Yugoslavia lagged enormously behind [in] this process of democratic transformations.<sup>24</sup>

In an ideal world, there would have been a long national debate on the way forward, and the separatist republics, if still bent on secession, would have proceeded through the complex process provided for in the Federal Constitution.

That was not to be.

### Germany's New Expansionism

The years following the general adoption of the Reagan Doctrine saw the pace of change accelerate in all the countries of the Socialist bloc. Developments were carrying them toward the "quiet revolutions" the West desired.

By the end of 1989, moreover, an equally important change—the third major one in Yugoslavia's relationship to the West—was under way. The reunification of Germany and its emergence as the giant of Europe would prove decisive for the fate of Yugoslavia.

As Yugoslavia continued in crisis, a much-strengthened industrial and political leadership in Germany looked east. Its influence was rapidly becoming "pervasive, in personal contacts, business investments, and intellectual life."<sup>25</sup> In the

post-Cold War era the means for expansion are economic, political, and cultural, rather than military. In Eastern Europe, German trade groups and banks suddenly became very active and German firms sought lower costs, especially lower wages and taxes. By 1991, one third of the trade between Eastern and Western Europe was based in Germany, according to a U.N. study,<sup>26</sup> and Germany became the major foreign investor in Eastern Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. German firms now have 1,500 joint ventures in Poland and 1,000 in Hungary.

But it was not just economics that drove Germany eastward. For many Germans, the expansion also made historical sense. Their firms were reviving ties to the East which went back to the pre-Communist era and even to the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

And perhaps even more disquieting for partially recolonized Eastern Europe were the cultural campaigns which accompanied economic expansion. These promote the use of the German language, German books, and German culture in general. The German foreign broadcasting service recently announced "a media and cultural offensive in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe." Its director called the new Germany "the most important media and cul-

tural bridgehead between East and West."<sup>27</sup>

The aims and scope of Germany's drive east were summed up by the Chair of The East Committee, the industrial group promoting business in the East: "It is our natural market.... [I]n the end this market will perhaps bring us to the same position we were in before World War I. Why not?"<sup>28</sup>

German expansion has been accompanied by a rising tide of nationalism and xenophobia, igniting old Yugoslav fears. These have been fed by evidence that Germany has been energetically seeking a free hand among its allies "to pursue economic dominance in the whole of *Mittleuropa*."<sup>29</sup>

In 1990, Yugoslavia lay in the path of that gathering German drive. Given Germany's economic and political power, and its aid and trade ties with Yugoslavia, many expected Bonn to try to draw the region into its orbit. The most obvious beginning would be in the northern republics which had historically been considered part of Europe, and especially in Croatia, which had strong German links.

During the Second World War, Nazi Germany had installed a clerical-fascist state in Croatia.<sup>30</sup> After the war,

(Continued on p. 64)



Yugoslavia, 1990

CIA

23. *Facts on File*, March 21, 1991, p. 197.

24. Jens Reuter, "Yugoslavia's Role in Changing Europe," in D. Muller et al., eds., *Veränderungen in Europa—Vereinigung Deutschlands: Perspektiven der 90er Jahre*, Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, 1991, pp. 115-16. Cited in Simic, *op. cit.*

25. Marc Fisher, "Eastern Europe Swapt by German Influence," *Washington Post*, February 16, 1992.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. Lanxin Xiang, "Is Germany in the West or in Central Europe?," *Orbis*, Summer 1992, p. 422.

30. Some 600,000 Serbs and 70,000 Jews and Gypsies died in camps run by



# The Covert Tactics and Overt Agenda of the New Christian Right

Kate Cornell

When Pat Buchanan, echoed by a Christian Right chorus, declared "religious war" at the Republican National Convention, there were those who shrugged off the announcement as the last irrelevant gasp of a moribund movement. The scoffers failed to recognize the battle cry of a serious political organization which has been quietly and systematically organizing from the grassroots up. The Christian Right, led by televangelist Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, now stands at the threshold of major political power in the United States.

In large part, the media and political pros dismissed Robertson's declaration because they could dismiss the power of the messenger himself, and in that assessment they were partially correct. Where they erred, however, was in focusing on the cult of lone demagogues and television preachers—to the exclusion of political operations. Thus, the experts were looking in the wrong direction and missed the main story: real political power.

In the 1980s, the politics of Jerry Falwell and his big-ego televangelist colleagues such as Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart rested largely on media exposure, and comparatively little on organization. National political operatives,

who calculate policy based on clout, understood that flaw in the top-heavy architecture of the Christian Right and were able to ignore much of its agenda during the Reagan-Bush years. Reagan and Bush, for example, paid lip service to a constitutional amendment for school prayer, but never pushed it. Supreme Court appointments notwithstanding, abortion is still a constitutional right, albeit circumscribed.

The Christian Right feels cheated by the Republican presidents it helped elect and swears it won't be fooled again.

## From Houston to Washington

For the last few years, Christian Right leaders have been plotting a new strategy. They have discarded the risky strategy that a president they supported will stack the political deck in their favor. Instead, they have built grassroots political organizations drawn from conservative evangelical churches. From this base, they are creating and mobilizing a disciplined voting bloc and hand-picking candidates for local and ultimately higher offices. A major stepping stone to national control—the takeover of the Republican Party by 1996—is now within sight. Using a town-by-town, county-by-county strategy, the Christian Right controls about a dozen Republican State Committees, including in Texas, Louisiana, Virginia, Hawaii, Washington, Kan-

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*The Christian Right now stands at the threshold of major political power.*

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Kate Cornell writes fiction, when not investigating the Religious Right. Photo: David Valdez, White House. Dede Robertson, Billy McCormack (top operative of David Duke), President George Bush, Pat Robertson, Ralph Reed.

sas, Iowa,<sup>1</sup> Florida, Alaska and Arizona. It is closely contesting control of the California GOP,<sup>2</sup> and making gains in Colorado, the Carolinas, and Minnesota.

The role of the Christian Right in the 1992 elections was unprecedented in its importance, although the results seemed mixed in the final tallies. The Coalition claims credit, probably rightly, for helping to reelect Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), and for electing Senator Lauch Faircloth (R-N.C.). It failed, however, to unseat Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii). The Christian Right's momentum was stalled in San Diego, California, where two-thirds of its 90 local candidates lost, with half of the 12 candidates for state assembly, including the great Right hope, Steve Baldwin, going down to defeat. The Christian Right-backed Senate candidate Bruce Herschensohn also lost a close race to Barbara Boxer, a San Francisco liberal.

On state ballot initiatives, results were also mixed. The Coalition lost an anti-gay initiative in Oregon and was defeated two to one on a Draconian anti-abortion initiative in Arizona. The group did, however, successfully back the defeat of a "death with dignity" initiative in California and an equal rights amendment in Iowa. At this writing, it is unclear how well the Christian Right did in the state and local races that were their main focus. It is highly likely, however, that there were many Christian Right activists elected to school boards all over the country. This target is especially important because the takeover of school boards and other local institutions, as well as the domination of local Republican Party structures, will be their focus for the next few years.

Bush's defeat is seen by the Christian Right as an opportunity to step in and restructure the decapitated Republican Party in its own image and to prepare for the 1994 and 1996 elections.

### Exploiting Apathy: The 15 Percent Majority

"We don't have to worry about convincing a majority of Americans to agree with us," said Guy Rogers, National Field Director for the Christian Coalition. "Most of them are staying home and watching Falcon Crest." In November 1991,

Rogers explained how to exploit low voter participation. Only about 60 percent of those eligible are actually registered, and even in a presidential year "only 30 percent of the eligible voters actually vote. Therefore 15 percent of the eligible voters determine the outcome."<sup>3</sup>



Linda Rosier/Impact Visuals

**Many people didn't like Pat Buchanan's speech to the Republican Convention. "It probably sounded better in the original German," wrote columnist Molly Ivins.**

Farther down the electoral ladder, from federal to state to local races, the percentage of voter participation decreases to a point where six or seven percent of eligible voters can determine the outcome.

The mathematics of power is especially favorable in local party primaries, a critical target of the Christian Right's new game plan. If it can mobilize an extra few percent of voters in these traditionally low turnout races, it can win the party nomination, even against incumbents. In districts where Republicans dominate, simply taking the nomination can be tantamount to victory.

The same method applies for taking over Republican Party structures. Elections for party posts are often held simultaneously with party primaries. The Christian Right runs a slate, methodically turns out its devotees in sleepy primaries, and takes control.

### Dialing for Voters

Since its 1989 formation, Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition has been refining techniques for turning out the chosen few voters. Incorporating the remnants of Robertson's 1988 presidential run and mailing lists from his Christian Broadcasting Network TV empire, the Coalition has grown rapidly and now claims over 500 chapters in 49 states, and 250,000 members.

The Christian Right launched its pilot project in San Diego, Calif. In the June 1990 primaries, it gained control

over the county GOP,<sup>4</sup> and then quietly fielded 90 candidates for such local offices as school board, hospital board, and town council. In what has been dubbed the "San Diego surprise," 60 Coalition-backed candidates won office in low-turnout races, in multi-candidate fields. They were often

3. Frederick Clarkson, "Christian Coalition: On the Road to Victory?," *Church & State*, January 1992.

4. Frederick Clarkson, "The Making of a Christian Police State," *The Freedom Writer*, September/October 1991. (Institute for First Amendment Studies, Box 589, Great Barrington, MA 01230). Some articles cited here have been compiled in *Challenging the Christian Right: The Activist's Handbook* by Frederick Clarkson and Skipp Porteous, also published by the Institute, 1992.

1. Frederick Clarkson, "Inside the Covert Coalition," *Church & State*, November 1992.

2. Carlos V. Lozano and Ralph Frammolino, "Christian Right Digs in At Grassroots Level," *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1992.

political unknowns who did no campaigning. The key was endorsement flyers distributed by the local anti-abortion group in churches on the Sunday before the Tuesday election, and a "massive phone bank" soliciting previously identified sympathetic voters.<sup>5</sup>

Six months after San Diego, Robertson refined the Coalition's tactics in Virginia Beach, Virginia, home of his TV operation and Regent University (of which he is president). There on home turf, the Christian Coalition-backed candidates for State Senate and House of Delegates won seven of nine races, ousting two incumbents, and taking two open seats. One recent Regent University graduate defeated a 20-year Democratic incumbent.

### Flying Under Radar on a Phone and a Prayer

The Virginia Beach campaign illustrates the prototype two-step approach: phone survey-driven "Voter ID" to locate supporters, and hand-distributed "Voter Guides" to get out the vote. Coalition leaders say they want to have the country's largest computerized "voter file." It will include millions of names and be used on an ongoing basis, not just for elections. The national model voter ID program was created by compiling lists—primarily from sympathetic churches and organizations—broken down by precinct, usually cross-referenced with the list of registered Republicans. This task was facilitated in Virginia Beach when the Christian Coalition took over much of the local Republican Party and coordinated its own structure with the Party apparatus and candidates. (Pat Robertson's son Gordon is a district chair.)

Using the Virginia Beach Voter ID lists, Coalition members phone surveyed pre-selected precincts and asked potential voters four questions: Are you a Republican or a Democrat? Did you vote for Bush or Dukakis? At that point, "if they answered Dukakis, Democrat," the survey ended, laughed Coalition leader Ralph Reed, "We didn't even write them down. We don't want to communicate with them. We don't even want them to know there is an election going on. I'm serious. We don't want them to know."<sup>6</sup>

5. Barry M. Horstman, "Crusade for Public Office in 2nd Stage," *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1992; and Frederick Clarkson, "California Dreamin'," *Church & State*, October 1991.

6. Clarkson, "On the Road...," *op. cit.*

Those who jumped this hurdle were asked if they favored restrictions on abortion. Lastly, surveyed on the most important issue facing Virginia Beach, respondents mentioned such problems as traffic, schools, taxes, etc. Potential supporters soon got a personalized letter focusing on their particular concern. These individually tailored letters from Coalition-backed Republican candidates were simply kicked out by computers which had collated the surveys to create a file on each ID'd voter. Interestingly, only 28 percent of the ID'd voters were anti-abortion, so letters to pro-choice Republicans did not mention the candidates' virulently anti-abortion views.<sup>7</sup> These voters may then have been unpleasantly surprised by one result of the Virginia Beach electoral junta: the first anti-abortion bill to pass the Virginia legislature since *Roe v. Wade*. Although subsequently vetoed by Governor Douglas Wilder, the bill changed the political landscape.

The second part of the Coalition's formula is the voter guides: slanted comparisons of candidate views on such subjects as homosexuality, abortion, taxes, and gun control. Ideally, these "guides," printed on half-letter-size page, are inserted in church bulletins on the Sunday before the Tuesday election. Alternatively, they are distributed in church parking lots, Christian bookstores, and polling places. In any case, distribution is targeted and timely.

The classic use of voter guides was in Sen. Jesse Helms' (R-N.C.) November 1990 come-from-behind reelection. Reed claimed that Helms, down eight points a week before election day, asked Robertson for help. "So Pat called me up," gloated Reed, "and said, 'We've got to kick into action.' Bottom line is...five days later we put three quarters of a million voters' guides in churches across the state of North Carolina and Jesse Helms was reelected by 100,000 votes out of 2.2 million cast."

Reed said they also made over

30,000 phone calls—no doubt to ID'd voters.<sup>8</sup> In the 1992 New York Senate race the Coalition distributed 1.5 million voter guides favoring D'Amato.


The trick was turned, as Reed likes to say, by "flying under the radar" of the opposition, in which category he includes

7. *Ibid.*; and Joe Conason, "The Religious Right's Quiet Revival," *The Nation*, April 27, 1992.

8. Clarkson, "On the Road...," *op. cit.*; and Pat Robertson, *The New World Order* (Waco, Texas: Word Publishing, 1991), p. 260.

**Christian Coalition**

# Family Values Voter Guide '92




**BILL CLINTON**  
Democrat

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTION 1992**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



**GEORGE BUSH**  
Republican

OPPOSES	Balanced Budget Amendment	SUPPORTS
SUPPORTS	Abortion on Demand	OPPOSES
OPPOSES	Parental Choice in Education (Vouchers)	SUPPORTS
OPPOSES	Voluntary School Prayer Amendment	SUPPORTS
SUPPORTS	Homosexual Rights	OPPOSES
SUPPORTS	Raising Income Taxes	OPPOSES
OPPOSES	Term Limits	SUPPORTS
SUPPORTS	Death Penalty	SUPPORTS
OPPOSES	Increased Funding for SDI	SUPPORTS
SUPPORTS	Line-Item Veto	SUPPORTS
SUPPORTS	Tax-Funded Abortion	OPPOSES
SUPPORTS	Condom Distribution in Schools	OPPOSES

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the media. Coalition Southern Regional Director Judy Haynes said of the Helms campaign: "The press had no idea what we were doing, and they still don't know what we did."<sup>9</sup>

### Divisions on the Right

Through this combination of centralized planning and grassroots organizing, the Christian Right hoped to work the same formula on the 1992 election. The Coalition promised to distribute 40 million Bush/Clinton presidential voter guides beginning in mid-October, with congressional candidates compared on the back.

Such overt support for Bush aside, conservative fury at the Republican establishment has created deep tensions within the Party. In September 1992, seeking pivotal reelection support, Bush addressed the Christian Coalition's national strategy conference. The next morning, in a closed session, Paul Weyrich, President of the Free Congress Foundation and leading Christian Right strategist, blasted the Republican establishment. "You know, I'm not against having these rallies...[with] candidates coming and presenting themselves.... I support [Bush]. I'll vote for him. But let's not have any illusions about what all of this is about. They wouldn't be caught dead with us under other circumstances. And the only reason they come here is because they're in trouble—and we bail them out—and then they turn their back on us and give us nothing in return! And we can no longer stand for it!" he shouted and was answered with a loud, long ovation.<sup>10</sup>

Significantly, Weyrich also spoke of an important new component of the Christian Coalition's political arsenal—National Empowerment Television (NET). He announced Ralph Reed's ascension to NET's board, which is chaired by former Secretary of Education William Bennett. Produced by the Free Congress Foundation and Coalitions for America, NET is an interactive closed-circuit satellite program, which presents an unfiltered conservative message and issues marching orders to conservative activists around the country. The technology links national leaders with grassroots organizers and supporters, and allows state-wide or even national teleconferences. The organization can almost instantaneously mobilize key leaders for lobbying and on other matters. On one



Jim Brozek/Impact Visuals

**Operation Rescue tries to ward off pro-choice activists in Milwaukee, 1992.**

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*The Christian Right runs a slate, methodically turns out its devotees in sleepy primaries, and takes control.*

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program, callers to an 800 number converse with hosts Weyrich, Michael Schwartz, and guests.<sup>11</sup> Although the system will take time to implement and is expensive to hook into, local subscribers are getting ready. The Pennsylvania Christian Coalition, for example, intends to produce its own program by January 1993. Meanwhile, Weyrich's show, "Family Forum Live" will be "part of the [Pennsylvania Coalition's] monthly meeting that will change the direction of our country."<sup>12</sup>

### Covert Coalition

If the Christian Coalition's campaign resembles a sophisticated marketing/public relations campaign, it also contains elements of covert operations. Coalition Executive Director Ralph Reed makes local politics sound like Vietnam.

"I want to be invisible," the armchair warrior told one reporter. "I paint my face and travel at night. You don't know it's over until you're in a body bag. You don't know until election night."<sup>13</sup>

11. David Gergen, "The Dawn of Satellite Politics," *U.S. News & World Report*, May 4, 1992.

12. *Pennsylvania Christian Coalition County Action Plan*, distributed at September Road to Victory Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.

13. Mark O'Keefe, "Robertson's Phone Corps Boosted Local GOP," *Virginian-Pilot* (Norfolk), November 9, 1991.

9. Clarkson, "On the Road...," *op. cit.*

10. Frederick Clarkson and Joe Conason, "A Covert Coalition: Inside Robertson's G.O.P. Trojan Horse," *New York Observer*, September 28, 1992.

## Fundamentally Different

The Christian Coalition is different from its predecessors on the Religious Right.

- It has drawn a large new batch of voters from the historically apolitical Pentecostal churches.
- The Coalition is shaping them into a far more disciplined voting bloc than has previously existed. A key goal is to create a permanent political operation—not one just geared to the election cycle.
- The organization is effectively using sophisticated computer technology to maximize its impact. Since the Christian Right is at least a small minority of potential voters almost everywhere, the leadership must accurately identify and turn out its own people as well as those who can be fooled into voting for its candidates.
- The Coalition combines grassroots organizing with careful, centralized planning.

It is not surprising, that from San Diego to Virginia Beach, the Christian Coalition's formula has been called "stealth tactics." In fact, the Coalition seems to become more covert in direct proportion to the degree of controversy it generates. Perhaps because the Republican National Convention generated such negative public and press reaction, Reed and Robertson have refused interview requests from major newspapers. More significant however, is the recently published *Pennsylvania Christian Coalition County Action Plan*—a 100-page manual for chapter organization and covert political operations against the Republican Party.<sup>14</sup>

The manual advises the "Republican Party liaison" of the local Coalition Executive Committee how to infiltrate GOP leadership:

*[Y]ou should never mention the name Christian Coalition in Republican circles. ...Become directly involved in the local Republican Committee yourself so that you are an insider. This way you can get a copy of the local committee rules and a feel for who is in the current local Republican Committee.... [Once inside the party structure], recruit people for every vacant seat and for each seat being held by someone who is not conservative, pro-family and who will put the Republican party ahead of principles." (Emphases in the original.)*

14. *New York Observer*, op. cit.; and see *Penn. Plan*, op. cit., pp. 9.1, 9.2.

There is a similar job description for a "Democratic Party Liaison" but the manual discourages pursuing the job, because the Democrats are too "liberal."

Other Christian Right groups such as Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE) and the Traditional Values Coalition, are actively using similar tactics in electoral campaigns around the U.S. "We have a plan to take our entire education system back and put it in God's hands," intones CEE President Robert Simonds. "And the way we are going to do it, is to take control of every school board in America." Simonds also says that civil government should function as "the police department within the Kingdom of God."<sup>15</sup>

### Read My Lists

Since the ascent of Ronald Reagan, the Christian Right has formed a strange and uneasy alliance within the Republican Party. As a recent fundraising proposal from Lou Sheldon, chair of the California-based Traditional Values Coalition, obtained by *CovertAction*, makes clear, these avowedly "non-partisan" organizations are neck deep in party politics. "This proposal," it opens, "represents five main facets to extract volunteers and votes from the Evangelical Christian community for Bruce Herschensohn." Herschensohn is a right-wing California Republican who narrowly lost his bid for the U.S. Senate this November. The proposal goes on to discuss generating "foot soldiers" for Herschensohn.<sup>16</sup>

Despite its lip service to nonpartisanship, the Christian Coalition has targeted the GOP as its earthly vessel. The money flows back and forth between the two organizations. In October 1990, for example, the National Republican Senatorial Committee gave the Coalition \$64,000. The Coalition, in turn gave \$25,000 to the Virginia GOP. This mutual backscratching raised eyebrows at the IRS, which is investigating the Coalition's

provisional 501 (c)(4) non-profit tax status and its "extensive financial and political ties to the national and local Republican Party." An IRS spokesperson told the *Washington Post* that financing political parties, or involvement in internal party business is out of bounds. "Certainly," he said, "we would feel that providing money to a particular party is equivalent to providing it to a candidate.... In our view, political party activities are clearly campaign intervention activity only slightly removed from the campaign."<sup>17</sup>

The flow of ideas is even more problematic. Many conventional Republicans disagree with the Christian Right on everything from religious tolerance, to abortion, to gay

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*"I paint my face and travel at night.  
You don't know it's over until  
you're in a body bag. You don't  
know until election night."*—Ralph Reed

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15. Frederick Clarkson, "Christian Reich?," *Mother Jones*, November/December 1991; Sonia L. Nazario, "Crusader Vows to Put God Back Into Schools Using Local Elections," *Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 1992.

16. Lou Sheldon, *Grassroots Outreach Program Proposal*, August 27, 1992.

17. Michael Isikoff, "Christian Coalition Steps Boldly into Politics," *Washington Post*, September 10, 1992.

rights, and are horrified by its more bizarre conspiracy theories such as those targeting mainstream figures as dupes of the Devil. "Indeed, it may well be," wrote Robertson in his best-selling book *The New World Order*, "that men of good-will like Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter, and George Bush ...are in reality unknowingly and unwittingly carrying out the mission, and mouthing the phrases of a tightly knit cabal whose goal is nothing less than a new order for the human race under the domination of Lucifer and his followers."<sup>18</sup>

Robertson and many of his followers believe there is a biblically prophesied end-times scenario at work. And during this current period of "tribulation," Christians of the right sort will be protected by God and emerge triumphant, as leaders of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Indeed, two years ago when Robertson renamed the school he founded from Christian Broadcasting Network University to Regent University, he explained the monarchical term. A "regent [is] one who governs in the absence of a sovereign." Thus Regent U.—a graduate school with 700 students, and plans for 3,000, with fully accredited programs in communications, education, religion, and law—trains students to "rule and reign" until Jesus, the sovereign, returns.<sup>19</sup>

The theocratic agenda of the Robertson empire has profoundly disturbing implications. The closest thing to a working model was Guatemala in 1982-83 under General Efraín Ríos Montt. Robertson was an enthusiastic supporter of the military dictator who waged a brutal counterinsurgency campaign, complete with scorched earth slaughter of as many as 10,000 civilians. One pastor from *El Verbo*, the Complete Word Pentecostal sect in which Ríos Montt was a leader, explained: "The Army doesn't massacre the Indians. It massacres demons, and the Indians are demon-possessed; they are communists. We

hold Brother Efraín Ríos Montt like King David of the Old Testament. He is the King of the New Testament."<sup>20</sup> Robertson recently praised the "enlightened leadership ...of former President Ríos Montt."<sup>21</sup>

In her book *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right*, Sara Diamond wrote about the Christian Right's worry that Reagan might not carry out its agenda. It saw the Ríos Montt regime as a psychological boost: "The Guatemalan experience, however vicarious, of a born-again Christian, shepherding an entire nation, reinforced a mentality within born-again circles, that they could seize the reins

of power and install—by force if necessary—a 'kingdom of God on earth.'"<sup>22</sup>

Robertson, like the Guatemalan pastor, sees "demons" everywhere. "The human potential movement," he writes, "as if part of a continuum, invariably leads to psychic power, and occult power leads straight to demonic power; and these lead, in turn to a single source of evil identified by the Bible as Satan."<sup>23</sup>

Robertson's "demons" include the large number of U.S. women who define themselves as feminists. In summer 1992, Robertson signed a fundraising letter which opposed adding an equal rights amendment to the Iowa state constitution. "The feminist agenda," he avowed, "is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians."<sup>24</sup> Robertson later backed away from the letter and blamed it on his staff.

Nevertheless, Robertson has escalated his shrill rhetoric and targeted the ACLU, Communist Party, and National Council of Churches, which represents such mainstream Christians as Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians. "The strategy against the American radical left," he wrote, "should be the same as General Douglas MacArthur employed against the Japanese in the Pacific: Bypass their strongholds, then surround them, isolate them, bombard them, then blast the individuals out of their power bunkers with hand-to-hand combat.... The battle to regain the soul of America won't be pleasant, but we will win it!"<sup>25</sup>

In its battle cry, the Christian Right calls for a high-tech holy war. Using the sophisticated product marketing techniques developed by advertising and public relations corporations, this theocratic movement is gaining significant influence in the Republican Party and capturing local and state governmental institutions for its Kingdom of God. Its tactics are part old-time community organizing, part revival meeting, and part shrewd ward-level machine politics. It threatens hellfire and promises *real-politik* power.

Although some skeptics cannot take the Religious Right seriously and find most televangelists simply silly, this serious political movement is positioning itself for power and digging in for the long haul. •

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***"The feminist agenda is not about equal rights....It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians."*** —Pat Robertson's office

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18. Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

19. Frederick Clarkson, "HardCor," *Church & State*, January 1991.

20. Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), p. 166.

21. Robertson, *The New World Order*, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

22. Diamond, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

24. Pat Robertson, undated fundraising letter, summer 1992. The charge of witchcraft prompted author-activist Barbara Ehrenreich to encourage an audience of feminists to picture Pat Robertson as a small green frog. "Concentrate, ladies," she urged, "concentrate."

25. Don Lattin, "Christian Right's New Political Push," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 15, 1992.

# Somalia: Politics Of Famine

Jane Hunter

Here come the wraiths of colonialism, imperialism, racism, and foreign debt, walking as skeletal forms across your TV, performers in a bad dream. The horror before you is Somalia—and your own white, Western government. If you want to make a moral judgment about it, about why a country of seven million people is now in danger of dying of starvation, the obvious one is depravity. The whole world knows and lets it continue—like the Nazi death camps. Historians may someday contend that this callousness is the preeminent legacy of the Cold War. What else will they say about a civilization which, having recently prevailed over Marxism, affords its citizens the tableaux of starving Somalis sponsored by Ultra Slimfast liquid diets and deodorants?

But those are night-time thoughts.

In the daylight of the here and now, the television is moving the world to pity and, belatedly, to action. This summer, after the skeletal Somalis became poster children (aid professionals and journalists knew that by the time aid arrived, those children would exist only on video), the powerful and famous flew into Somalia. Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kans.) was among the first. Audrey Hepburn was there. The model, Iman, wore “a dark beret and simple trousers and shirt” to view the starvation in her motherland.<sup>1</sup>

Jane Hunter is editor of the independent monthly report *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, available from P.O. Box 19580, Sacramento, CA 95819. Photo: Somali villagers pull a barge filled with relief supplies.

1. Reuters, October 1, 1992.

This televised demonstration of solidarity and urgency is what it takes—the only thing that will make the public write checks and the politicians take action. Yet, even after the horrifying pictures of sick, stick-thin Somalis became a staple of the evening news, the response was disappointing. U.S.-based aid organizations said that donations were only a small fraction of the public outpouring for Ethiopia in 1984 and less than one percent of the aid collected for Ethiopia in 1985.<sup>2</sup> Compassion fatigue, a proliferation of disasters, and the poor economy were offered as explanations for the shortfall. But the televised focus did educate the public on some of the basics about Somalia.

In January 1991, a two-year rebellion succeeded in driving out a ghoulishly abusive dictator, Mohamed Siad Barre. But then the victorious United Somali Congress (USC) fell prey to the clan rivalry Siad had encouraged to strengthen his rule. When open conflict erupted between two branches of the Hawiye clan, which predominate in the USC, Western embassy and aid personnel pulled out in a hurry.

The Hawiye leaders, Ali Mahdi Mohamed—the first to seize the presidential mantle which he retains—and his challenger, warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, have been at it ever since. Tens of thousands of Somalis, largely women and children, and the occasional foreign aid worker, have been

2. David G. Savage, “U.S. Donations for Somalia Lagging,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 1992.



slain in the cross-fire. Militias under the control of the warlords and armed bands in the pay of merchants have made a good business of, alternately, hiring themselves out to guard food shipments and then looting them. The amount of food they have stolen is not clear; some suspect that the aid organizations are overstating the case to excuse their frequent retreats from Somalia.

What is clear to most observers, though, is that as the agonizing situation wore into its second year, the armed young men who snatch food meant for the starving were becoming younger and more thuggish. Many attribute their volatility to the *qat* they chew in the afternoons and some say the warlords are systematically addicting rural youth to ensure their continued service.<sup>3</sup> "The stuff comes to the markets in late morning and they chew it all afternoon," said a Red Cross worker of the mildly narcotic plant that is widely used in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. "By sundown, they are as jumpy as cats. That's when the shooting really starts."<sup>4</sup>

Extensive coverage of Somalia during August permitted the point to be made that famine is a political, not a natural disaster. Drought alone does not cause mass starvation; the failure to deliver food causes people to starve. Satellite photographs of Somalia had predicted drought since mid-1991.<sup>5</sup> Western governments and the international organizations they control did nothing until their inaction was exposed in the horrific television stories.

Now that the disaster has been digested by television, the more subtle political realities are, as usual, smothered by sentiment and self-congratulation. Commentators have cast the Somali leaders as warlords carrying on traditional strife with decidedly non-traditional weapons. Beneath this simplification is a pattern of behavior richly rewarded in the past by Western powers, always in search of "natives" willing to use whatever force was necessary to bludgeon their compatriots into submission and deliver them up as cheap labor.

During much of its mentorship of Somalia, the U.S. government shrugged off General Accounting Office findings that donated U.S. food was diverted from the needy and sent to friends of the Siad government and to the army. "Although it may not be popular to have PL 480 origin food go to the military, the need of feeding poorly paid conscripts and their families still remains," noted the Agency for International Development (USAID), which administered the program. "The U.S.," wrote journalist Steve Askin, "sends a bizarre message to Africa when it lets pro-American regimes steal donated food from hungry people."<sup>6</sup>

Now Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Mohamed Farah Aidede are fighting for recognition as the legitimate government of Somalia. They anticipate that the winner will reap the rewards which, since the end of colonialism—1960 in Somalia's case—foreign partners have showered on their African vassals: fat foreign bank accounts, foreign-trained



Jenet Green, Oxford/Impact Visuals

palace guards, stretch limos, state visits. But with no more Soviets to guard against, Somali ports and coastal waters have lost their strategic value and there's nothing the Somalis can do, however cheaply, that can't be had from the closer (and whiter) East Europeans.

### Cold War Dynamic

Somalia's value wasn't always quite so low. During the Cold War, it was a chip that the U.S. picked up by default. In 1977, Ethiopia, the prize worth playing for in the Horn of Africa, won the support of the Soviet Union, which terminated its aid to Somalia and helped Ethiopia beat back a Somali-backed force in the Ogaden Desert.

After the fighting ended, Ethiopia pulled away from the U.S., its post-colonial backer, and into alignment with Moscow. The Carter administration began an unenthusiastic aid relationship with Siad Barre's regime. The Somalis suspected that the U.S. would rather be consorting with the Christian Ethiopians than the Muslim Somalis.<sup>7</sup>

7. Thomas W. Lippman, "Somalia, in defeat, may yet return to the Soviet fold," *Washington Post*, March 20, 1979. Ethiopia's long-ruling group at the time, the Amhara, are Christian. But at least a third of the population is Muslim.

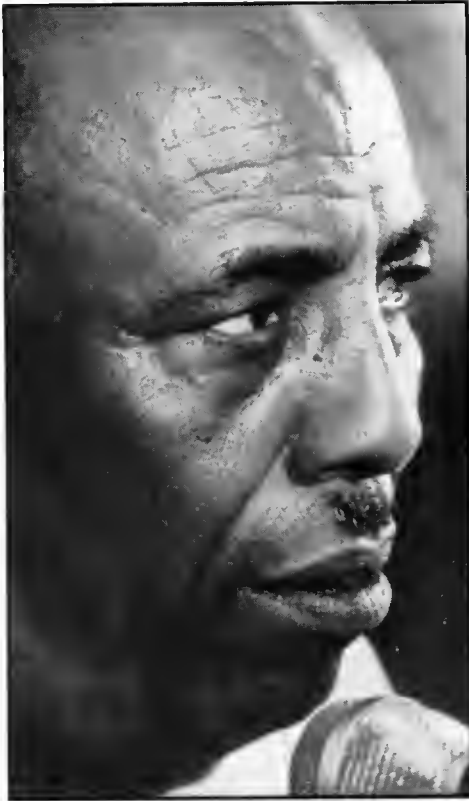
3. Reuters, August 25, 1992.

4. Associated Press, August 2, 1992.

5. Michael A. Hiltzik, "Somalia—Anatomy of a Famine," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1992.

6. Steve Askin, "Food Aid Diversion," *Middle East Report*, March-April 1987.





Somalia National Tourism Agency, 1978

**Siad Barre, former president of Somalia.**

Nevertheless, when the Soviets departed, Washington signed a \$100 million access agreement for the port of Berbera, which had been a Soviet military base, and began an aid program that would total \$600 million by 1985.<sup>8</sup> President Carter's national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and congressional Cold War hawks wanted to link strategic arms limitation talks to the USSR's presence in the Horn of Africa.<sup>9</sup>

Soon the Horn

of Africa would seem like a chat over tea as the detente-hating Right savaged the Carter administration over Angola, Afghanistan, Iran, and Nicaragua.

By the time the Reagan administration took power, the "strategic" region was fully entwined in the U.S. Right's prosecution of the Cold War. In the right-wing litany, the "monster" Mengistu Haile Mariam, Ethiopia's president, came to exemplify the imaginary evils exclusive to Marxism. In fact, Mengistu's murderous excesses bore a striking similarity to those of the Right's fair-haired boy, Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. Siad Barre, whose alignment was always a commodity to be openly marketed, was as bloody and cruel as they come.

Measurements of blood and pain had little bearing on the intellectual construct peddled by the Right during the 1980s and, as few U.S. consumers of its opinions had any notion which African country was which, its bellowing about the savagery of Mengistu served mainly to dehumanize Africans,

generically. That atmosphere, in turn, had to make it easier to justify the slaughter of large numbers of Africans in Angola, Namibia, and elsewhere in the theoretical fight against the evil Soviet empire.

On the ground, Somalia was not, as they say, a fun ally for the Reagan administration. In 1984, Siad Barre's military accidentally shot down two U.S. F-15 aircraft. Joint "Bright Star" military exercises with the Somalis in 1983 and 1985 were hair-tearing experiences for the U.S. forces involved. Washington ultimately abandoned making Berbera into U.S. Central Command headquarters, moving that rapid deployment force to Florida. Berbera, a diplomat told UPI, "is not really a viable or reliable part of Middle East strategy. The U.S. is more established in more reliable places" such as Mombasa, Kenya, and Oman.<sup>10</sup>

### The U.S. Bails Out

By the end of the decade, the U.S. had had its fill. For ten years, said Rep. Donald Payne (D-N.J.), the object had been "to deny the Soviets access to the Red Sea and the Arab Sea. Then, Congress changed the policy and pressed Siad Barre on human rights abuses." A State Department report said that Siad Barre's forces had coldbloodedly murdered at least 5,000 unarmed civilians in the ten months ending in March 1989; Siad's forces had also murdered at least 500 members of the Isaak clan, whose Somali National Movement was fighting an armed rebellion in the north of the country, which has since declared itself the Somaliland Republic.<sup>11</sup> (The Soviets were also getting sick of their prize, Ethiopia, and urging it to return to Washington's good graces.)

As Washington disengaged and began withholding aid,<sup>12</sup> Siad Barre turned to Libya and South Africa for arms.<sup>13</sup> By the end of 1990 it was all over and Siad's flight to the bush precipitated the wreckage of Mogadishu. Finished just 18 months earlier, the grandiose U.S. embassy with its swimming pools and offices for 200 staffers, was sacked only days after the remaining 30 employees were airlifted out.<sup>14</sup> Siad was forced into exile in April 1992 and is now in Nigeria.

Then, as Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Mohamed Farah Aidede squared off, the serious trashing of Mogadishu began. "Somalia has ceased to exist as a national entity," wrote Jane Perlez after she visited Somalia in late 1991. Mogadishu "has been enveloped in a mad swirl of self-genocide" as the factions battled each other with the enormous arsenals that were Somalia's legacy of the Cold War.<sup>15</sup>

8. The U.S. was not the only country involved in aiding Siad. In the mid-1980s, he also is believed to have had military aid from South Africa and possibly from Israel. The most common explanation for these ties is that Siad needed spares for Soviet weapons, which South Africa seized from Angola and Israel both seized and trafficked in. ("Somalia, South Africa—and Israel?" *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, October 1985.) Italy, meanwhile, stopped arms shipments after 1983. (Rome International Service, 1620 UCT, September 22, 1985, FBIS-MEA, September 24, 1985, p. R-2.)

9. Bernard Gwertzman, "Top Carter Aides Seen in Discord on How to React to Soviet Actions," *New York Times*, March 3, 1978.

10. Charles Mitchell, "U.S. Losing Interest in Military Bases in Somalia," UPI, *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1985.

11. Jane Perlez, "Report for U.S. Says Somali Army Killed 5,000 Unarmed Civilians," *New York Times*, September 9, 1989.

12. *Ibid.*

13. "Somalie: U.N. régime à bout de souffle," *Le Monde*, November 18, 1989; *Star* (Johannesburg) December 22, 1989, in *ANC News Briefing*.

14. Jane Perlez, "Heavy Fighting Erupts in Somali Capital," *New York Times*, January 1, 1991; UPI, *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 1991.

15. Jane Perlez, "Somalia Self-Destructs, And the World Looks On," *New York Times*, December 29, 1991. She noted that the arms had come from Libya, Germany, China, and Italy, as well as from the U.S. and the USSR.

## Too Little, Too Late

Except for the aid workers—who have braved the anarchy of Somalia and, sadly, played god when they did not have enough food to go around—there are no heroes. All the rich industrial nations are to blame for the dying in Somalia. So are the wealthy Arab “sister” states, as they call themselves. The United Nations, too, has behaved despicably. But the U.S. is certainly the prime malefactor. Not only has it casually let Somalia die, but it has not recognized its responsibility as the self-constituted “leader of the free world” and as Somalia’s last international sponsor, to be in the forefront of the rescuers. “It is incumbent on us to take the lead in Somalia because we helped wreck it,” said Holly Burkhalter of Human Rights Watch.<sup>16</sup>

It was a full 18 months after the post-Siad killing began that the Bush administration announced a crash program to aid Somalia. At that point, aid agencies estimated, 1,000 to 2,000 Somalis were dying every day and one fourth of Somali children under five had already died. But the effort was not timed to the rhythm of Somali tragedy but to George Bush’s presidential ambitions. The announcement came three days before the Republican Party convention and television coverage of the airlift coincided nicely with that extravaganza. On August 13, President—and presidential candidate—George Bush declared that “starvation in Somalia is a major human tragedy” and announced that “the United States will take a leading role with other nations and international organizations to overcome the obstacles and ensure that food reaches those who so desperately need it.”<sup>17</sup>

The announcement took everyone by surprise. “We learned about it the same way everybody else did—from the news,” said a U.S. official in Africa. Although U.S. officials hustled to find food to fill cargo planes,<sup>18</sup> over a week passed before the flights to Somalia’s interior got under way.

When a bullet dinged the wing of one U.S. cargo plane, its flights to Belet Huen were immediately grounded. Other flights were also canceled to avoid fighting, which has now spread across much of Somalia.<sup>19</sup> Planes carrying qat, however, are not deterred by the bullets that stop the mercy flights. Dozens of privately-chartered small aircraft carrying the drug from Nairobi land daily at small Somali airstrips.<sup>20</sup>

## Racially Selective Response

How could the West, which under the leadership of President George Bush planned a New World Order, have let the situation in Somalia go so long and get so bad? And, how, specifically, could the administration justify hanging back from Somalia when it had speedily sent its armed forces to

## The U.S. Runs a Rat Line

In Somalia, as in other foreign ventures, Washington opened its arms to some of the grotesques it spawned. In October 1992, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) reported that the U.S. has run a “rat line” for war criminals of Siad Barre’s regime. Washington quietly allowed them into the U.S. on tourist visas and then facilitated their passage into Canada, where even unwelcome refugees can spend years plying the appeals system. Ali Mohamed Siad, the eldest son of Siad Barre and a colonel in his army, is living in Vancouver while his case is pending.

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*“I never saw anyone come into the embassy with blood on his hands.”*

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Also making it to Canada was Col. Yusuf Abdi ali Tokeh, one of 300 Somali officers who graduated during the mid-1980s from U.S. training at Fort Leavenworth. In the spring of 1988, he ordered the executions of at least 120 civilians in the northern village of Gabilai. Two years later, after brushing up at a five-month refresher course at a Mississippi air base, he crossed into Canada and got a job as a Burns security guard in Toronto. After Somali refugees in Canada identified Tokeh and other war criminals, describing their acts of torture and murder in a CBC documentary, Canada deported Tokeh back to the U.S.

U.S. officials vehemently denied running the rat line and defended failing to screen the visa lines for war criminals. Said James Bishop, the last U.S. ambassador to Somalia, “I never saw anyone come into the embassy with blood on his hands.” Bishop now works in the State Department’s Bureau of Human Rights.

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From: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, “The Fifth Estate,” October 6, 1992.

shoot up Panama and deployed its army engineers to install gold faucets in the emir of Kuwait’s bathroom, even before the smoke of the war against Iraq had cleared?

The Bush administration’s hesitancy has been ascribed to inattention. The president was, at the time, distracted by his new status in the polls: an unpopular failure who would probably not be reelected. But the outrageous neglect of Somalia follows almost precisely the pattern of U.S. policy toward Liberia, where since 1990, a very similar, if slightly less harrowing tragedy has been playing itself out. When rebels overran the capital of that West African country and, over a period of horribly bloody weeks, ousted President Samuel Doe, a tyrant richly supported by Washington, the Bush administration sent in the Marines—but only to airlift out Americans and other foreign nationals. Liberians, whose ancestors were freed slaves and who claimed a special emotional connection to the U.S., were left to starve and die.

16. Hearings, House Africa Subcommittee, September 16, 1992.

17. Don Oberdorfer, “U.S. Took Slow Approach to Somali Crisis; Delay in Action Attributed to Civil War, Other Global Problems, Lack of Media Attention,” *Washington Post*, August 24, 1992.

18. Michael A. Hiltzik, “U.S. Effort to Help Somalia Off to a Shaky Start,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 21, 1992.

19. Matt Marshall, “U.S. Halts Some Relief Flights to Somalia,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 1992.

20. AP, August 2, 1992. Somalis say that the thousands involved in marketing the drug are earning money to purchase food.

## Toxic Largess

Donors may be fatigued, but scammers are not. An agreement, estimated by U.N. environmental experts to be worth millions of dollars, surfaced in September. In it, Somalia consented to burn and store half a million tons of toxic wastes. The document was circulated by the exiled Siad Barre and, in the chaos of Somalia, its validity has still not been determined. A copy obtained by AP shows a 20-year commitment, signed on December 5, 1991, by Nur Elmy Osman, the "health minister" of Ali Mahdi Mohamed, to allow Acher Partners to build an incinerator near Mogadishu and discusses building a landfill to hold as much as 11 million tons of the industrial and hospital "treated" waste, including "solid and liquid waste of the toxic type."<sup>1</sup> Acher Partners' phone was answered at the home of a young woman near Lausanne, Switzerland. She said she did not know what the company did.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, a Swiss paper reported that Italian companies were also involved in the waste deal and that Ali Mahdi—who denied all the allegations—was using revenues from the deals to buy weapons.<sup>3</sup>

In late September 1992, a Swiss chemical engineer, dispatched by a Geneva company the U.N. hired as consultants, conducted tests in the Indian Ocean off Somalia. He said he found neither traces of waste nor an incinerator ship which Mostafa Tolba, the head of the Nairobi-based U.N. Environment Program, had said might be anchored at a Somali port.<sup>4</sup>

1. Reuters, September 8, 9, 1992; AP, September 10, 1992.

2. Reuters, September 7, 1992.

3. *Le Nouveau Quotidienne*, cited by Inter Press Service, September 13, 1992.

4. In 1985 there were accusations in Kenya that Somalia had agreed to allow the U.S. to dump nuclear wastes in its coastal waters. (*The Sunday Nation* (Nairobi), September 8, 1985, FBIS-MEA, September 9, 1985, p. R-2.)

4. AP, October 1, 1992.

Two cases of dereliction do not make a pattern. But add Haiti where, in violation of international law (blessed by the ever-more supine Republican courts), the administration has arrested refugees and transported them back to well-documented repression. Haiti, Liberia, Somalia—a pattern of racism seems to emerge.

Or consider the gentleman warrior stance of the U.S. Marine task force which arrived on the Somali coast in mid-September, fresh from duty in the Persian Gulf. Its mission, as explained by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen, was to "provide seaborne command, control and communications for the U.S. military airlift carrying the Pakistani troops to Mogadishu." The U.S., he told the House Africa subcommittee, "has no intention of landing a Marine expedition."<sup>21</sup> The dirty work of escorting aid convoys under the guns of Mogadishu fell to apparently expendable accessories: Pakistan's 500 soldiers.

21. Martin Sieff, "Marines Sail to Support Somalia's Airlift," *Washington Times*, September 17, 1992.

Interestingly, the U.S. flotilla was perceived as a potential intervention force. The U.N.'s former special envoy in Somalia, Mohamed Sahnoun, said he feared: "It could provoke a reaction by the Somalis. ...It has the appearance of an overkill."<sup>22</sup> In independent (but unrecognized) Somaliland, the presence of the flotilla raised alarm: There were fears that it presaged the implementation of a U.N. trusteeship—and the reincorporation of the former British colony into Somalia.<sup>23</sup>

The Somalis need not have worried about old-fashioned gunboat diplomacy. While the bulk of the U.S. military has become a showpiece money-sponge, the business end of the institution—the Special Forces—is the threat they and other nations and forces of the South were most likely to encounter. These units are trained to deal with "Third World" hot spots. The Green Berets sent from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to help with the U.S. airlift, were said to be "familiar with the geographic and cultural environment in Somalia and Kenya."<sup>24</sup>

According to one reliable source, the Navy task force off the Somali coast is actually a floating hotel for a variety of commando forces: Navy SEALs, Army Green Berets, and Air Force Special Forces. It is not clear what they may be assigned to in Somalia, but apparently, the Army has a combat control group whose usual mission is to set up and secure airfields.

## The World Responds, Kind Of

In addition to its own lethargic and politically timed reaction, Washington must take some blame for the U.N.'s pathetic response. "The U.N. is waiting for the president to tell them what to do," Holly Burkhalter of Human Rights Watch told Congress in September. "The U.N. needs to be kickstarted."<sup>25</sup>

It should surprise no one who has followed the Bush administration's wars against Iraq and Libya that, despite the displeasure of many member nations, the U.S. has effectively hijacked the United Nations. In July 1992, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali underlined the U.N.'s position by charging that the Security Council had spent too much time on the "rich man's war" in ex-Yugoslavia and not enough on Somalia.<sup>26</sup> In September, U.N. officials complained that the U.S. was dictating strategy for Somalia to the U.N.'s new relief coordinator. "The Americans are coordinating the world, so they might as well coordinate the coordinator as well, I suppose," said one U.N. official.<sup>27</sup>

On its own, the U.N. showed mostly survival instincts, pulling its staff when the shooting got bad. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees left Somalia in April 1991, effectively stranding 5,000 Ethiopian refugees from the Ogaden War who had been making their way home when trapped by the fighting. Those Ethiopians are now starving to death

22. AP, quoted by Martin Sieff, *op. cit.*

23. BBC News Hour, 0510 UCT, September 25, 1992.

24. AP, August 20, 1992.

25. Hearings, House Africa subcommittee, September 16, 1992.

26. AP, July 28, 1992.

27. Paul Lewis, "U.S. Offers Plan For Somali Food Relief After Criticism of Efforts By Others," *New York Times*, September 18, 1992.

in a camp one mile from the Mogadishu port. What little food they have received has been provided by the Arab League.<sup>28</sup>

In late 1992, the U.N. began pulling its act together. "We are a year and a half late," special envoy Sahnoun admitted.<sup>29</sup> Belgium and Canada agreed to send 3,000 troops to guard food shipments, but, at press time, Mohamed Farah Aided was refusing to cooperate. And the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) group of states was bitterly critical of a plan to finance part of the expenses of 500 Belgian paratroopers with EC development aid money earmarked for Somalia. "As usual, the money comes back to Europe. It's shameful," said an ACP official.<sup>30</sup>

The U.S. record is distinguished only in that it has not been bettered by anyone else. When David Andrews, the Irish foreign minister, went to Mogadishu in August, he was the first EC minister to visit Somalia.<sup>31</sup> He was followed in October by his president, Mary Robinson. By then, the Red Cross was estimating that 1,000 Somalis a day were dying.<sup>32</sup> "I feel completely shamed and diminished when I see fellow citizens of the world, fellow women and children, who are so deprived of even the right to a life, the right to any quality of life," she said.<sup>33</sup> Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo of Italy, southern Somalia's former colonial ruler, visited in September and vowed to put the country back together again.<sup>34</sup> Italy had been Somalia's largest aid donor when it pulled its embassy staff out of Mogadishu in November 1991.

In August, two German military aircraft joined the U.S. airlift for a week, flying high-protein biscuits from Mombasa to Mogadishu.<sup>35</sup> Britain, the current head of the EC, was reported to be considering a political initiative—perhaps a fact-finding mission in September.<sup>36</sup> The BBC reported a chartered Russian plane carrying tons of food, medicine and supplies to Somalia. Anyone wanting to join the effort was instructed to get in touch with the OIC's secretariat.

The activism of Abdou Diouf, current chair of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), can be kindly categorized as hand-wringing. Since last winter, the OAU has considered sending a peace-keeping force to Somalia, but, reflecting the sensitivity of its component governments to intervention, refused to intervene without the consent of all the warring parties. Nevertheless, the worldwide focus this

fall roused the OAU to send a ministerial-level delegation to Mogadishu. Although the OAU said that Diouf would soon reveal his "broad initiative," so far, there has been no announcement. In October, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni became the first African head of state to visit Somalia.<sup>37</sup>

An earnest Israeli effort petered out when neither the public, the drug companies, nor key government ministries responded to appeals. But peace activist and philanthropist Abie Nathan mounted an independent effort to raise funds for a tent city on the Kenyan border with Somalia.<sup>38</sup>

While relief efforts in Somalia are desultory and inadequate, attempts to prevent impending famine in other parts of Africa are almost non-existent. In Sudan, fighting has been intensifying and both the government and the southern rebels have routinely used food as a weapon. A Christian missionary expelled from the southern Sudanese city of Juba worried about the fate of the civilian population there. "No one in Africa is asking why there has been war in Sudan since the 1950s. Are we waiting for the horrific television pictures before we can take action, when in fact it will be too late?"<sup>39</sup>

In September, Charles Lamunière, the head of the U.N.'s humanitarian affairs department in Geneva, warned that pledges and deliveries of aid to drought-ravaged southern Africa have been inadequate and that Mozambique could become the "next Somalia."<sup>40</sup> The warning about Mozambique was reiterated by the British charity Oxfam: "Collapsing government structures, unpaid soldiers and the severity of the drought are all combining to produce a disaster on the scale of that sweeping through Somalia." Oxfam called for the overhaul of international relief efforts.<sup>41</sup>

What is needed is the overhaul of the world—and of the self-styled leaders who looted it for decades and then turned a deaf ear to cries for food.



CIA

28. AP, August 26, 1992.

29. *Guardian* (London) (nd), quoted in *Washington Times*, September 6, 1992.

30. Inter Press Service (IPS) 1991, September 30, 1992.

31. Reuters, August 9, 1992.

32. Reuters, October 9, 1992.

33. Reuters, October 7, 1992.

34. AP, September 1, 1992; Reuters, September 9, 1992.

35. Reuters, August 25, 1992.

36. Reuters, August 21, 1992.

37. DPA, October 3, 1992.

38. *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, No. 8, September 26, 1992.

39. IPS, September 10, 1992.

40. AP, September 15, 1992.

41. Reuters, September 18, 1992.



Although the Rhodesian armed forces had for many years recruited black soldiers and police, these forces were reviled and isolated in black communities. They therefore had little political impact, and were generally regarded by their white commanders as of limited military value. In 1978, the CIO augmented its program to foment splits within the nationalists by creating an armed force for these nationalist “dissidents.” Code-named “Operation Favour,” the program involved the CIO, PsyOps, the Selous Scouts, and other branches of the military. Utilizing Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole—two former nationalist leaders who had since been coopted by the Smith regime—the CIO and the Selous Scouts set about establishing pro-government guerrilla units.<sup>27</sup> At the time, it was alleged that these men were guerrillas who had accepted a government amnesty. They were, in fact, not former guerrillas at all, but a concoction of government troops, Selous Scouts, supporters of the renegade nationalists, and principally unemployed lumpen elements from town and country.<sup>28</sup>

By the end of the war, the approximately 5,000 black mercenaries of “Operation Favour” were notorious for their undisciplined and murderous behavior—even by the appalling standards already set by the Rhodesian forces. Militarily, they had proved hopeless, and in battles with the guerrillas, they had been outfought on several occasions. But politically, they had successfully contributed to the CIO campaign of destabilization and violence in rural communities.

In much the same way as the U.S. said of Vietnam: “We had to destroy the village in order to save it,” the CIO destroyed the fabric of black society in order to save the country, by which they meant white minority rule. Like ARVN in South Vietnam, the Rhodesian Security Force Auxiliaries created by “Operation Favour” were a classic alienated mercenary army, preying on their own people in the interests of a privileged minority. But the war was far too advanced, the guerrillas too numerous, and the population too mobilized in support of nationalist demands. “By the time the Auxiliaries were proving a viable scheme,” wrote one Rhodesian analyst, “the whites had run out of time.”<sup>29</sup>

So, added to the CIO’s other assets at the end of the war were some 5,000 violent young black men who had become hated and unwanted in their own land.

### “Operation Winter”—The Wars Continue

All these forces and assets developed in the Rhodesian war—the poisoners and their poisons, the Selous Scouts, the CIO officers, and their agents, the contra armies of the MNR and the Auxiliaries—represented an enormous potential for

warmaking in Southern Africa. Their intimate knowledge of secret war was formidable; their direct, personal experience with mysterious death and killing by stealth could never be created in military colleges. The deployment of such forces, or their demobilization and pacification, could literally alter the course of Southern African history.

As the Rhodesian misadventure collapsed into inevitable victory for the nationalist movement, the fate of these forces was being secretly discussed in many darkened rooms.

In 1980, the political landscape of Southern Africa—and indeed the world—looked very different from today. In Mozambique, a radical left-wing nationalist government was seriously attempting to transform the colonial legacy of poverty and underdevelopment along socialist lines. In Angola, a similar government was holding the South African army at bay with the assistance of Cuban troops. The nationalist movement in Zimbabwe was promising to join forces with Mozambique and Angola in finally confronting the apartheid regime in Pretoria. And in South Africa itself, the popular uprisings of 1976-78 had mobilized and radicalized a new generation of black youth. The South African ANC had recommenced the armed struggle and was beginning to pose a serious threat to the Pretoria regime.

On the world stage, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher were calling for an onslaught against communism—in which they bracketed any radical nationalist movement. In South Africa itself, President P. W. Botha echoed their tune with his strident calls for “total strategy” and “total war” against African Nationalism (which he called communism).

So was born “Operation Winter”—a secret South African government program to transfer the assets of Rhodesia’s dirty war to Pretoria’s control. This plan, however, needed the support of the British government, and therefore of the United States. Ideologically and politically, there was little separating the main players, at least insofar as defense of the last remaining white-ruled part of Africa was concerned.

At the time “Operation Winter” was launched, the British government was the *de jure* and *de facto* authority in Rhodesia. Britain could not be seen to condone a mass exodus of such deadly proportions straight to the international pariah the Pretoria regime had become. And so, under the guise of secret diplomatic negotiations in the region, a complex exercise in duplicity and deception was launched.

Although the labyrinthine workings of this exercise would fill a good sized book, a broad outline and one example of the deception will illustrate the scope and nature of the operations.<sup>30</sup>

27. Cilliers, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-16.

28. Ellert, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-54.

29. Cilliers, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

30. The following account is based on a number of interviews with both confidential and identifiable sources. The latter include: Commander of the Rhodesian Special Air Service, Garth Barrett; former Mozambican Minister of State for Security, Sergio Vieira; former Mozambican Minister of Information



The framework is simple enough. The South Africans were to be the principal beneficiaries of the Rhodesian assets; they, after all, had to carry on the fight. The Rhodesian assets were happy enough to go to South Africa. The British and Americans, while not displeased with the arrangement, were concerned with potential political and diplomatic repercussions. Hence the stipulation that the transfer of the Rhodesian assets should appear to be informal and unorganized. The Rhodesian commanders, then, simply ordered the Rhodesian mercenaries to take their cars and possessions, head for South Africa, and report to designated South African military and intelligence personnel.<sup>31</sup>

The scale of the exercise, however, precluded complete secrecy since many personnel and much equipment had to be moved in trucks, trains, and planes. "When the Western world says they have no knowledge of the [transfer]," Didymus Mutasa remarked, "we understand that they do not want to be honest and accept the blame honestly. Those of us who were in the bush and those who were in the country know the truth. We actually saw truckloads of men and arms being taken by rail to South Africa."<sup>32</sup> British and American planes [which were in Rhodesia with the Ceasefire Monitoring Forces] also took part in the transfer of Rhodesian forces to South Africa.<sup>33</sup>

To explain any unauthorized movement of guerrillas or Rhodesian troops, the British government, which was supposedly monitoring the transitional period and commanding the Rhodesian military forces, used a combination of denial and secret diplomacy. Thus the commander of the British forces stated that he simply knew nothing about it until it was all over—an unlikely possibility as British monitors were present at all military camps and airfields.

"A lot of stuff went up in smoke in this country in early 1980," said one ex-Rhodesian soldier, "...records of interrogations, army set-ups and strategies, profiles of people, personal records.... Salisbury was surrounded by a little cloud

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***"The business of dealing in poisons, killing by stealth, by booby-trap bombs and so on, is by its very nature a very dirty business..., practiced by...people who operate in the grey twilight world."***

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—Henrik Ellert, Rhodesian intelligence officer

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of black smoke—from all the army camps, government offices, police stations. And shredding, too. The Special Branch shredders were working overtime.... You've never seen so much paper."<sup>34</sup>

On the diplomatic front, a more complex web of deception was practiced. In the case of Mozambique, where it was well known that the MNR was a Rhodesian CIO operation whose sudden appearance in South Africa could not be denied, a deal was cut. In a series of secret meetings involving British and Mozambican officials, General Peter Walls, Ken Flower, and South African military and intelligence leaders, the Mozambicans were told that if they agreed to help keep ZANU guerrillas under control and

committed to the election process, the MNR would be disbanded. Then the MNR was simply transferred to South Africa and the British told the Mozambicans that the South Africans and Rhodesians had betrayed the agreement. Former Mozambican Security Minister Sergio Vierra's comment on this deception—which was to have such tragic consequences for his country—is itself a poignant reminder of the ethics of big power politics:

We were naive. We were very naive. The question of betrayal and deception on the transfer of the MNR to South Africa introduces a moral assessment, a moral judgement on a strategic exercise. Most unfortunately I should say, governments don't have very often any moral values, but only the interests that they have.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, a wide variety of South African dirty tricks units absorbed that deadly arsenal of secret war, the Rhodesian Special Forces. In addition to the better known South African units which received these forces—the Recce Commandos, which incorporated Rhodesian Selous Scouts and the SAS—the poisoners and their poisons were absorbed into the appropriate South African departments, and the MNR, of course, was unleashed in a far more effective and deadly fashion by Pretoria.

The South African Special Branch death squads which have been exposed in the past few years also have a Rhodesian origin. The so-called Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) which ran the death squads, was in its first form set up as a South African military intelligence department for

and Special Adviser to the President, Luis Cabaco; former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith; Zimbabwean Minister of National Affairs, Didymus Mutasa; and Commander of British Forces in Rhodesia under Governor Lord Soames, Major-General Sir John Acland. The confidential sources include a former high-ranking intelligence commander and former Rhodesian CIO officers.

31. General Peter Walls confirmed to me that he had "made arrangements with [his] South African counterparts" to receive the forces involved, but claimed that those Rhodesians who took up the offer did so in a completely spontaneous fashion. SAS commander Garth Barrett, however, explained in some detail how the Rhodesian Special Forces units were briefed by their own commanders and moved "lock, stock and barrel to South Africa." Interviews with Walls and Barrett, Johannesburg, August 1991.

32. Interview with Didymus Mutasa, Harare, August 1991.

33. Interview with Sergio Vierra, Maputo, Mozambique, August 1991.

34. Frederikse, *op. cit.*, p. iv.

35. *Ibid.*; and interview with Sergio Vierra, Maputo, August 1991.

Rhodesian dirty tricks operators, and many of the CCB operators were Rhodesians. A special department of South African Military Intelligence was also established specifically to destabilize the neighboring states. This department, known as the Directorate of Special Tasks (DST), was staffed with many Rhodesian military and intelligence specialists. They ran the dirty war into the neighboring independent states, creating devastation and conflict on an unprecedented scale in Southern Africa.<sup>36</sup>

The lessons South Africa learned from the Rhodesians transformed the way Pretoria fought in the 1980s. So-called "black-on-black" violence in the wars between the ANC and the Bantustan warlords are an extension of the lessons of "Operation Favour." Indeed many Rhodesian dirty war specialists are to be found in the structures of Gatsha Buthelezi's KwaZulu forces and in other Bantustan armies.

The role of contra and proxy forces also originated in Rhodesia and was then developed by the South African regime. So, too, the technique of internal destabilization of communities through the use of indiscriminate violence, ritual killing, and mysterious death. The "third force" killings which have decimated South African black townships, destabilized communities and weakened the ANC, bear an uncanny resemblance to the process started by the Rhodesian CIO and Selous Scouts in rural areas of Rhodesia.

36. Interview with former DST staff member, Roland Hunter, Johannesburg, August 1991.

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In this sense, the lessons of Rhodesian counterinsurgency were much more than a recipe to be replicated under South African conditions. As former CIO officer Henrik Ellert told me in a remarkably candid way: "Not everyone likes to get their hands dirty or get involved in this type of killing. Not everyone can go out and kill. It's very few people who can go and kill in cold blood like this. The business of dealing in poisons, killing by stealth, by booby-trap bombs and so on, is by its very nature a very dirty business. It's a business that is practiced by a special calling of people, people who operate in the grey twilight world. ..."<sup>37</sup>

The Rhodesian secret war produced such people in quantity, people who think and operate in the "twilight world," people who can kill in cold blood. Such were the assets handed on to South Africa from Rhodesia's dirty war through the connivance of Western powers in 1980. The question today is what will happen to these assets now?

### Conclusion:

The present South African government remains determined to harbor and protect the architects and practitioners of the secret wars, and insists that they be indemnified by an amnesty which will cover up the past. But as Henrik Ellert makes clear, those who live in this twilight world have a special calling. "Operation Winter" enabled the secret warriors of Rhodesia to continue practicing this calling for another decade, with results which will haunt the region for many more decades.

There are presently many conflicts in Africa, and indeed elsewhere, into which a new "Operation Winter" may deliver the deadly skills and assets of Southern Africa's war by stealth. In South Africa itself, secret operations to destabilize the black community have continued relentlessly despite the de Klerk government's stated commitment to negotiations.

It is easy enough to start these conflicts and exacerbate the divisions they create, but terribly difficult to stop them when they have served their nefarious purposes. As our experience in the region has shown, secret war leaves deep and long lasting wounds, often with unforeseen consequences. The legacies of psychological warfare, of ethnic engineering and tribal armies, of poison warfare and assassination, undermine reconciliation and development long after their instigators leave the scene.

Only full disclosure and thorough investigation can begin to break the cycle and provide a basis for attempting to address the legacies of trauma and destabilization. If Southern Africa is not to limp into the twenty-first century bloodied and broken, the secret war and its legacies must be seriously addressed. Now.

37. Interview with Henrik Ellert, Harare, August 1991.

(Anthrax, continued from p. 18)

## Preventing Biological Warfare

As we have seen, treaties alone do not stop biological warfare. Biological weapons are clearly "useful," and serve best as covert agents. Secrecy not only adds to the element of terror, but also generally guarantees anonymity and the absence of reprisals to a perpetrator. BW usually spares property, harming only crops, animals, or people, depending on the agent(s) selected for use. It fits particularly well with civil war, "low-intensity conflict," special operations, counter-insurgency, and assassinations. Historically, biological weapons have been used by the technologically more advanced against the less developed, since countries with extensive public and animal health infrastructures are difficult to harm seriously and are more likely to detect an attack.

Given this utility, the failure of treaties,<sup>33</sup> and the long history of biological warfare (dating back at least to the 14th century when plague-infected bodies were thrown over the city walls to infect the besieged Black Sea port of Caffa), how can this form of warfare be prevented?

Thus far, no allegation of biological warfare has been scientifically investigated and conclusively resolved.<sup>34</sup> Researchers must begin by analyzing epidemics with unusual epidemiology, as was done here for Zimbabwe. No non-governmental organization or international agency is doing epidemic surveillance for possible BW. Although military agencies are charged with performing this function, their methods and results are classified and therefore unavailable to the international community.

A strong international body should be empowered and funded to investigate thoroughly, draw conclusions, seek out, and punish perpetrators of BW actions. The U.S., however, has recently obstructed the Biological Weapons Convention Third Review Conference (the international body with the mission of improving the BWC's effectiveness) from developing effective measures for verification and compliance.<sup>35</sup>

Biological warfare is a human rights issue. To deliberately expose human beings to disease is not only a violation of international laws, it is immoral. The purpose for using BW on domestic animals and crops can only be to create famine. Thus, hunger and disease become primary weapons of war. Only the refusal of informed citizens to tolerate the existence of biological weapons will force governments, which value expedience above morality, to cease their use. •

33. Meryl Nass, "The Labyrinth of Biological Defense," *op. cit.*; and Vera Rich, "Anthrax in the Urals," *Lancet*, vol. 339, 1992, pp. 419-20.

34. See Piller and Yamamoto, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-69, for unresolved allegations.

35. Meryl Nass, "Can Biological, Toxin and Chemical Warfare Be Eliminated?," *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 1992, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 30-32.

## How Can Facts Be Proven?

Until now, Zimbabwe's anthrax epizootic has been accepted inside Zimbabwe, as well as by international experts, as a natural event. Despite an occasional newspaper headline during the outbreak wondering whether "terrorists" were to blame, no one with scientific credentials publicly questioned its origin.

The current analysis raises a number of questions about the epizootic, but does not claim to provide the answer. What is needed is a thorough scientific evaluation. Three separate types of investigations may shed light on the epizootic's origin.

First, sampling soils for the presence of anthrax could be very useful. If anthrax is not present in the soils of the commercial (white) farming areas, then it is unlikely that vaccination and superior veterinary services kept the commercial herds healthy; rather, these sites probably were not exposed to anthrax. Using the same analysis, if anthrax spores were found in unusual locations, such as on roofs of homes in endemic areas, dissemination by air would be the likely cause.

The second study would examine the genetic correspondence between anthrax strains which caused the epizootic, and other strains, such as those occurring naturally in southern Africa, those held in research laboratories, and those originating in other parts of the world. This investigation would provide strong evidence for the origin of the strain which caused Zimbabwe's outbreak.

The third approach would be a study of military records and interviews with veterans, seeking eyewitness evidence of the effects and use of biological weapons, and documentary evidence relating to their use.

Such a careful and complete investigation could resolve the question of the origin of Zimbabwe's anthrax epizootic, and provide a model for future investigations of possible biological, toxin and chemical weapon events. •

*Justice is the best revenge. Remember CovertAction in your will.*

(*Yellow Rain, continued from p. 40*)

trichothecene or appropriate symptoms in the alleged Yellow Rain victims, might suggest that the earlier claims were invalid. For the editors, however, since the earlier claims were true according to the preferential method, the failure to find evidence in the later period only showed that U.S. protests and *Wall Street Journal* publicity had stopped the enemy from using Yellow Rain!<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, regarding the bee feces theory, the editors of the *Journal* simply evaded or lied about its content and significance. It was the refugees who identified the yellow spots with the poisonous rain. Since these spots were over 99 percent honey bee feces, how could this Yellow Rain be deposited by the Soviets and their clients engaging in chemical warfare? The editors never addressed that point. They also ignored the British report, issued in 1986 after a four year silence, that they had found no trichothecenes in any samples they examined. That the army itself, with more sophisticated technology, failed to confirm one of the Minnesota lab's positive finding of trichothecenes, or to find the toxin in 79 other samples, was mentioned only in passing, as if not devastating to the *Journal* position.

Editorial writer William Kucewicz authored a September 6, 1985 article, entitled "The 'Bee Feces' Theory Undone," the theory being undone in Kucewicz's view because Meselson's samples of bee feces from Thailand "admittedly" contained no trichothecenes. But this finding was not inconsistent with Meselson's "theory" since most samples from areas allegedly subject to attacks also showed no such toxins along with the bee feces. At this point, Kucewicz was relying heavily on the continuing claim that trichothecenes did not occur naturally in the area. In two articles focused on Canadian reports,<sup>30</sup> Kucewicz never mentioned a key finding which undercut his argument: a leaf sample collected at Ban Sa Tong that had a trichothecene-producing mold on it. And although he cited another Canadian report on the Ban Sa Tong incident and findings, he reported only the description of the attack, the symptoms of the victims, and the finding of trichothecenes in the area—but failed to mention the finding that the quantities of the toxin were very small and "comparable to the levels reported world-wide for natural occurrences of trichothecenes on stored cereal." This is the preferential method with a vengeance.

### El Mozote and Unworthy Victims

The *Wall Street Journal's* editorial handling of the Yellow Rain controversy was in stark contrast with its treatment of massacres in Central America, carried out under U.S. sponsorship. Perhaps the greatest massacre of unarmed civilians during the Salvadoran struggle of the 1980s occurred at El

Mozote and nearby towns in December 1981. The U.S.-trained Atlacatl battalion swept through the villages unopposed, and proceeded to destroy homes, rape women, and kill everyone in sight. The number of dead, according to lists compiled by surviving peasants, totaled 733, of whom 280 were children. At the time, the U.S. Embassy and State Department furiously denied an army massacre. But investigations of the Mozote grave sites in connection with the new peace accord have now fully corroborated claims of a major massacre. Forensic scientists "were surprised only by the size of the skeletons. 'We never thought we would find so many kids, ...and so young.'"<sup>31</sup>

While the massacre was possibly the largest, there was a steady stream of lesser but sizable massacres of civilians as the Salvadoran army conducted a series of sweeps through the countryside in the early 1980s. An article by Raymond Bonner of the *New York Times* on July 12, 1981, was entitled "Mass Killings Rack Salvador," and in this and other articles similar slaughters were described at Río Lempa, Cabañes, the Guazapa Volcano, Cerro Pando, La Joya, La Capilla, San Pedro, Barrios, and elsewhere. Bonner pointed out, for example, that after the Atlacatl Battalion swept through the Guazapa Volcano in the spring of 1983, "The signs of slaughter were everywhere," [according to] free-lance journalist Don North [who] reported for *Newsweek*. North, who spent forty-two days with the guerrillas in their Guazapa stronghold, wrote about the 'charred and scattered bits of clothing, shoes and schoolbooks.' A villager from Tenango showed him shallow graves in which he said the soldiers had buried dozens of men, women, and children, after executing them with guns and machetes.<sup>32</sup> Murdering children was a specialty of the Salvadoran army: Twelve of those massacred at Barrios were less than 5 years old.<sup>33</sup>

The Atlacatl Battalion, trained by U.S. advisers just prior to the El Mozote massacres, was headed by Lt. Commander Domingo Monterrosa, who "became a convert to American-style tactics and the greatest army hero of the war."<sup>34</sup> Another leader of the army troops killing civilians was Lt. Col. Sigifredo Ochoa Pérez. Colonel John D. Waghelstein, a senior U.S. adviser to the Salvadoran army, was enthusiastic about Ochoa and his methods,<sup>35</sup> so we may surely conclude that the civilian massacres were consistent with *de facto* U.S. advice and policy.

For the Reagan administration, the ongoing massacres were merely a public relations problem, and honest reporting was a threat to policy. The El Mozote massacre, for example, occurred inopportunistically just before a required administration certification that the Salvadoran government was making a concerted effort to improve human rights. Thomas Enders, the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, not only denied an army

29. "The yellow rain attacks have apparently stopped, for example, an accomplishment for which the Reagan administration and the *Wall Street Journal* can claim some credit." "Who Speaks for Science?," November 4, 1985. The editors fail to note that reports of Yellow Rain did not stop, but rather the reports could not be verified using methods other than taking them at face value.

30. "Yellow Rain Confirmed," March 31, 1986; "Canada's Other 'Yellow Rain' Findings," August 25, 1986.

31. Tim Golden, "Salvador Skeletons Confirm Reports of Massacre in 1981," *New York Times*, October 22, 1992.

32. Raymond Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit* (N.Y.: Times Books, 1984), p. 335.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 320.

34. Golden, *op. cit.*

35. Bonner, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

massacre, claiming that "there were probably no more than 300" persons living in Mozote at the time anyway, he launched a furious attack on Bonner and Alma Guillermoprieto (of the *Washington Post*) for providing evidence of the killings. Enders was lying even about the Embassy's own knowledge, as two investigators sent to the scene concluded that "there had been a massacre."<sup>36</sup> The Enders statement that there were only 300 people in Mozote was doubly false: The reporters had claimed the killings applied to Mozote and nearby villages, and a representative of the International Red Cross with close experience in the area said that at least a thousand people lived in Mozote at the time.<sup>37</sup>

### The Journal's War on the Media

On February 10, 1982, the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* published a long editorial entitled "The Media's War," which criticized Bonner in particular for his reporting on El Mozote and the press in general for alleged credulity and failure to serve the higher purposes of U.S. foreign policy. In contrast with the victims of Yellow Rain, the editors expressed not the slightest interest in, let alone indignation over, the "helpless" children butchered by the Atlacatl Battalion. As victims of U.S.-organized forces, they were "unworthy" and Bonner was by definition "overly credulous" to have believed the claims of a dozen survivors and his eyewitness experiences in the face of official denials.

This *Journal* attack, in short, launched an editorial war on the media under the guise of concern over media improprieties. While the editors quoted Thomas Enders' denials and assertions as serious evidence, they raised no question about government credibility. Nor did they note the extensive record of similar army massacres, or mention that reporters saw large numbers of bodies and interviewed 13 survivors. Because the reporters got evidence in rebel-held territory, they were alleged to be naive victims of a "propaganda exercise."

But the editors moved quickly to a more global attack, alleging that reporters in general tend to romanticize revolution, etc., giving selected illustrations (Herbert Matthews on Cuba, David Halberstam on Vietnam). No mention was made of countervailing factors such as patriotic bias, or pressures on reporters from editors and officials to toe the government line, or the murder of journalists in El Salvador and Guatemala that might make them overly cautious.<sup>38</sup>

At a still higher level, the editors asserted as fact that because Cuba controlled the Salvadoran guerrillas, a rebel victory would bring Cuban-style repression. The "big story" for the editors was that when U.S. enemies win, it is bad business; therefore, reporters should "bring some perspective

to the story." Translated, this means that reporters should "get on the team" and reserve their credulity for government claims, not those unhelpful to the higher truth. This "conservative" formula for reporting would have caused the now acknowledged truth about El Mozote to be suppressed, and the fabricated Yellow Rain damage to the "helpless people" to be given massive publicity. The truth is purely instrumental for a propaganda agency.

Bonner himself was removed from his Central American beat by the *Times* not long after the government-*Journal* assaults in what was widely regarded as an object lesson in the costs of reportorial integrity. The editors of the *Wall Street Journal* surely deserve credit for this "cleansing" operation. Bonner stated in his book:

It is widely believed that the *Journal's* editorial had a significant impact on the reporting from El Salvador, in favor of the administration. The editorial "turned the press around," General Nutting told a reporter some months later. The foreign editor of one major newspaper sent copies of the editorial to his correspondents in Central America. "Let's not let this happen to us" was the message, according to one of the paper's reporters.<sup>39</sup>

This was the editorial page serving in its role as enforcer of state propaganda.

### Conclusion

The *Wall Street Journal*, by virtue of the focused attention of its editorial page, was in the vanguard in pushing virtually every big lie of the Reagan era, and it did its best for many other right-wing causes. This involved remarkable hypocrisy and exceptional levels of intellectual dishonesty, both of which may have been a consequence of the editors' belief that they were instruments of higher ends, making inaccuracies on details of little importance (and even useful to the various "causes").<sup>40</sup>

In helping clear the ground for the arms buildup, counter-revolutionary intervention abroad, and the Reagan policies of deregulation and upward redistribution of income, the *Journal* editors served the short-term ends of the business class well. But the chickens have come home to roost in the 1990s with a deteriorating infrastructure, huge debt overhang, macro-policy gridlock, and an angry and polarized population. It is thus doubtful that the editors served well the long-term interests even of the business class as they applied their brazenly instrumental conception of truth to their comments on the passing scene.

39. Bonner, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

40. Referring back from the accumulating evidence of fraud in the Yellow Rain case to the proven lies in the 1981 State Department "White Paper" on El Salvador, the editors wrote: "Doubtless there will be an effort, as with the El Salvador White Paper, to discredit the charges. Just as minor inaccuracies [sic] couldn't hide the basic truth [sic] of the subversion effort in El Salvador" etc., etc. "Yellow Rain & Arms Control," September 21, 1981. Any inaccuracies are minor for the editors when it comes to a "basic truth" as asserted by the state.

36. Quoted from one of them by Bonner, p. 341. The Embassy investigators had never gotten to El Mozote and had never interviewed survivors, which the two reporters had.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 342.

38. See Julia Preston, "Killing off the news in Guatemala," *Columbia Journalism Review*, January-February 1982; Michael Massing, "Central America: A Tale of Three Countries," *Columbia Journalism Review*, July-August 1982.



more than half a million Croatian émigrés moved to the Fatherland, where their organizations had considerable political influence.

Milovan Djilas may have had these considerations in mind, when, more than a year before the secession crises of 1991, he warned:

It is definitely in the interests of the majority of other nations — for example, the United States, Great Britain, the USSR— to support the unity of Yugoslavia. ...But I doubt that Yugoslavia's neighbors...are so well-intentioned. I also suspect that in some states, for example, in Germany and Austria, there are influential groups who would like to see Yugoslavia disintegrate — from traditional hatred, from expansionist tendencies, and vague, unrealistic desires for revenge.<sup>31</sup>

### Europe Intervenes

Yugoslavia walked a tightrope through the 1980s until economic and political crisis, particularly the fall in the standard of living, broke its balance. As rival ethnic groups shook the rope and the state teetered, European Community (EC) intervention helped push Yugoslavia into the abyss of disintegration and horrific civil war.

After World War II, Yugoslavia brought together communities which had historically been at odds: Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Muslims (the descendants of converted Slavs), Albanians, Hungarians, etc. At the same time, the federal government made enormous efforts after World War II to create a state which gave full play to "national identities" and entrenched the rights of minorities.

Since there was, however, no way to draw the map of Yugoslavia to enclose each group in its own republic or autonomous region, large minorities would always exist within any republic or region. Thus, for instance, large numbers of Serbs—more than two million—found themselves living in Croatia or Bosnia or elsewhere when the boundaries of Serbia were drawn in 1945.

Within the Balkan tinderbox, two specific actions set off the current war in Yugoslavia: the secessions of Slovenia and Croatia and the intervention of the EC. The former might not have occurred without the intervention of the latter. Continuous EC intervention from early 1991 could not have been more likely to set off a war if it had been deliberately designed to do so. It turned a manageable internal conflict into appalling fratricide.

Slovenia and Croatia were clearly driving toward independence well before widespread fighting broke out between the Yugoslav National Army and Slovene territorial forces in the spring of 1991. Their separatist aspirations received quiet encouragement and assistance from several European powers, particularly Germany and Austria, for some time prior to the outbreak of hostilities.

the Croatian fascist regime. See Jonathan Steinberg, *The Roman Catholic Church and Genocide in Croatia, 1941-1945*, unpublished, Trinity Hall, Cambridge, U.K.

31. Argyrios Pisiotis, "Peace Prospects for Yugoslavia," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Summer 1992, p. 97, quoting from an article by Djilas.

In early February 1991, the Council of Europe stated that, to join Europe (as some Yugoslav leaders wanted), Yugoslavia would have to resolve its crisis peacefully and hold multi-party elections for the Federal Parliament.<sup>32</sup> This bland-sounding precondition was, in effect, an invitation to Slovenia and Croatia to push towards secession, for it linked economic advantages to "restraint" in federal dealings with those republics.

By March, when it was clear that Croatia intended to secede, Croats and the Serb minorities began to clash. Croatian nationalists organized violent demonstrations in Split, besieged a military base in Gospic, and generally intensified their nationalist campaign. On May 5, the federal government authorized the Army to intervene in Croatia<sup>33</sup> and two days later, the military began calling up reserves and deploying units in western Yugoslavia. "Yugoslavia," said Defense Secretary Gen. V. Kadijevic, "has entered a state of civil war."<sup>34</sup>

The EC then began openly to apply pressure on Yugoslavia. In June, the EC foreign ministers gathered in Dresden and warned that future assistance would depend on "respect for minority rights," "economic reforms," etc. The EC was no longer posing conditions for Yugoslavia's entry into Europe, but simply for normal economic relations.<sup>35</sup>

When Slovenia and Croatia declared independence on June 25, 1991, the EC openly intervened again, and again its actions promoted separatism. Within three days after the Yugoslav Army deployed units in both republics, the EC threatened the "cut-off of \$1 billion in scheduled aid" unless Yugoslavia accepted mediation by three EC foreign ministers.<sup>36</sup> Slovenia and Croatia would otherwise have been occupied by Yugoslav troops and the secessions halted.

The foreign ministers imposed a ceasefire which called for a three-month suspension of the Slovene and Croatian independence declarations; withdrawal to barracks of all federal troops; and acceptance by Serbia of Stipe Mesic, a Croat, as federal president.<sup>37</sup> There was no settlement of the federal dispute with Croatia, and federal troops remained in parts of that republic—those inhabited primarily by Serbs. The Yugoslav Army ordered the withdrawal of its troops from Slovenia shortly thereafter.

Although the EC intervention halted the secessions temporarily, by preventing Yugoslavia from defending its own unity and territorial integrity, it worked to the advantage of Slovenia and Croatia. (How would President Lincoln have treated a similar foreign intervention in the U.S. Civil War?)

In October 1991, the EC called a Conference on Yugoslavia in The Hague. The aim, in theory, was to end the crisis and negotiate a new federal structure for the Balkan nation. The *Draft Convention on Yugoslavia* prepared by the EC announced that the republics "are sovereign and independent,

32. Predrag Simic, *Chronology of the Yugoslav Crisis, January 1990 - May 1992*, Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, 1992, p. 1.

33. *Facts on File*, May 9, 1991, p. 342.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Branslava Alendar, *European Community and the Yugoslav Crisis*, Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, 1992, p. 8.

36. *Facts on File*, July 4, 1991, p. 489.

37. *Ibid.*

with [an] international identity."<sup>38</sup> Thus, while the Conference adopted seemingly reasonable principles for resolving the conflict, at the same time, in effect, it abolished Yugoslavia as a unitary state. Within a short time, and upon expiration of the three-month delay imposed in July, both Croatia and Slovenia formally seceded from Yugoslavia.

One is left to wonder whether the EC wanted a unified Yugoslavia and acted consistently and stupidly to defeat this goal, or whether other factors were quietly at work. The key to the seeming contradiction between stated goals and actual consequences may be found in the behind the scenes maneuvering of an expansionist Germany. As William Zimmerman, former U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, noted:

We discovered later that [German foreign minister] Genscher had been in daily contact with the Croatian Foreign Minister. He was encouraging the Croats to leave the federation and declare independence, while we and our allies, including the Germans [sic], were trying to fashion a joint approach.<sup>39</sup>

In fact, reunited Germany has been throwing its weight around for some time, and not just on Yugoslavia.<sup>40</sup> "The Germans," said a U.S. State Department official, "are now so much more stable and so much more powerful than anyone else in Europe that they can get away with almost anything."<sup>41</sup>

From 1990, Germany was forcing the pace of international diplomacy on the question of secession. In December, within a few months of the *de facto* recognition of Slovenia and Croatia at the Hague Conference, Germany itself recognized their independence. "Germany virtually forced its allies to reverse themselves and grant recognition to Slovenia and Croatia."<sup>42</sup>

### Not Just a Civil War

Just as foreign intervention helped foment the war in Yugoslavia,<sup>43</sup> outside forces have also helped sustain and exacerbate the conflict. Croatian political organizations in the diaspora—especially in Germany, Canada, the U.S., and Australia—often espouse extremist, right-wing, and sometimes openly antisemitic views. Through the generation which left Yugoslavia after World War II, they have maintained close ties to the Nazi-sponsored Croatian independent state led by Ante Pavelic and Archbishop Alois Stepinac.<sup>44</sup>

38. Alendar, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

39. John Newhouse, "The Diplomatic Round," *The New Yorker*, August 24, 1992, p. 64.

40. See Marc Fisher, "Germany's Role Stirs Some Concern in the U.S.," *Washington Post*, January 23, 1992. The decision by Germany to raise interest rates also caused concern, as did Kohl's reneging on his promise to produce a compromise on agricultural supports in the GATT talks.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

43. There have been three wars: 1) the war in Slovenia between the YNA and Slovene territorial forces (very brief); 2) the war in Croatia between Croatian military forces and Serb irregulars (many of them local inhabitants); 3) the war in Bosnia between Croatian forces, Bosnian and Croat irregulars and Bosnian Muslims, on the one hand, and Bosnian Serb irregulars, on the other.

44. Hitler characterized the Croats in the wartime puppet state as "genuine converts to National Socialism." (H.R. Trevor-Roper, ed., *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1973), p. 95.

Since 1945, Croatian émigrés and émigré organizations have actively and consistently supported the cause of Croatian independence. "These separatists," said a prominent Slovak émigré, "want to prove that they were right 50 years ago, and they try to pass the mythology on to their kids...that things will be perfect when independence comes."<sup>45</sup>

International émigré support has been financial as well as political. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, overseas Croatians were largely responsible for funding Croatian President Franju Tudjman's victorious presidential election campaign in 1990.<sup>46</sup> After he won, the money continued to flow. "Canadians," said Toronto businessman Dick Bezic, "bankrolled [Tudjman's] new state and its army."<sup>47</sup> In December, Tudjman acknowledged the importance of the émigrés' role. "Croatians in Canada," he told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "have helped a great deal in the establishment of a democratic Croatia."<sup>48</sup>

In addition to cash, overseas Croatians have sent arms. Croatians and Bosnian Croatians claim that Bosnian Serbs possess large amounts of modern weapons and munitions. While the charge is true, it must be remembered that the arms factories in Bosnia are still producing, and the Yugoslav army left behind large stocks of weapons which were grabbed up by all sides in the conflict. Furthermore, in addition to their own supplies, the breakaway states are covertly receiving large amounts of arms from the Western powers despite the U.N. arms embargo.<sup>49</sup> Recently, overseas Croatians established an extensive network designed to evade the United States embargo on arms shipments to former Yugoslavia.<sup>50</sup> Documents indicate that weapons were moving to Croatia from Austria and Slovenia or Hungary, and senior U.N. officials acknowledged that "the Croatians are armed to the teeth."<sup>51</sup>

The network existed well before Croatia declared independence. More than a year ago, a U.S. Customs official blocked a large, illegal shipment of weapons from Croatian activists to Yugoslavia. It included \$12 million worth of Stinger and Redeye missiles, as well as thousands of M-16 assault rifles. The arms smugglers, a clandestine military organization known as OTPOR, had an alternative plan to ship weapons through a German front company.<sup>52</sup>

OTPOR members had also requested Nigeria to supply end-user certificates for large quantities of weapons, including low-altitude surface-to-air missiles, armored Czech Tatra trucks mounted with launching frames for 122 mm rockets, and 5,000 122 mm rockets.<sup>53</sup>

45. Robert Toth, "Émigrés Fuel Old Hatreds," *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1992.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*

49. See, for example, International Defense Reports, *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* (London), July 1991, p. 363.

50. Christopher Bellamy, "Croatia Built Web of Contacts to Evade Weapons Embargo," *The Independent* (London), October 10, 1992.

51. *Ibid.*

52. Edward Lucas, "U.S. Sting Uncovers Croatian Arms Deal," *The Independent* (London), August 14, 1991.

53. Bellamy, *op. cit.*

It was reported in England last year, that there was "a booming trade in arms [supplied by] ...Austria, Belgium and Hungary" to the Serbian and Croatian militias.<sup>54</sup> As none of the source countries named, with the possible exception of Belgium, was likely to be shipping arms to Serbian irregulars, the supplies were most likely going to Croatia.

Political contributions and arms shipments on such a scale cannot take place without the knowledge of intelligence agencies, in this case, especially those of Germany, Austria, Canada, and the U.S. In countries actively seeking to destabilize Yugoslavia, these services are likely to have had official sanction to assist the transfers. There have also been repeated reports of foreigners—including British, U.S., and German nationals with extensive military experience—serving in the Croatian forces or militia.<sup>55</sup> Reportedly, some are absent-without-leave from active military units. In what amounts to an officially sanctioned policy of covert military assistance, active-duty soldiers (including some from the U.S.) sometimes leave undated letters of resignation with a commander and take official leave to serve as "mercenaries" in foreign wars.

The movement of weapons in the region appears to be massive. German customs officials claim they have evidence of large military convoys of up to 1,500 military vehicles moving out of Eastern Germany bound for Croatia. In April 1992, east German military vehicles bound for Croatia were seized by Customs officials on the German-Austrian border.<sup>56</sup> Recently, there have been reports that Croatia has used German Leopard tanks and MIG-21 fighters in its invasion of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although Germany denies these reports,<sup>57</sup> reliable Yugoslav sources state that a number of Leopard tanks were put out of commission by Serb irregulars at Kupres in Bosnia in May 1992. These sources also claim that a number of MIG fighters from the former GDR have been shot down over Bosnia.

The use of MIGs has been confirmed by senior United Nations officials and supported by Croatia's air force commander. In February, he boasted that "within a month... [Croatia] would take delivery of fighter aircraft from unnamed European governments."<sup>58</sup>

The Bosnian government has also reportedly received arms and troops from abroad, notably from Islamic countries seeking to assist fellow Muslims. The London *Guardian* has reported major arms shipments from Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. A Bosnian government adviser admitted in Zagreb at the end of August that Bosnian officials had traveled to the Croatian coast to take delivery of arms shipments from the Middle East.<sup>59</sup>

54. *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, *op. cit.*

55. "German magazine delves deep among the killers," *Searchlight* (London), November 1992, p. 23; and Michel Faci, "National Socialists Fight in Croatia," *The New Order* (Lincoln, Nebraska), January-February 1993, p. 1.

56. Christopher Bellamy, *op. cit.*

57. Anna Tomforde, "Germany: Government Officials Deny Croatia Is Using Their Tanks," *Guardian* (London), August 5, 1992.

58. Blaine Harden, "Croatia Acquiring Warplanes from European Countries, Air Force Chief Says," *Washington Post*, February 11, 1992.

59. Blaine Harden, "Bosnia: Middle East Muslims Send Charity and

Islamic countries have also sent trainers and "volunteers" to assist and fight with Muslim forces in Bosnia and have established secret training camps there. The soldiers came from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Syria.<sup>60</sup>

Again, such large-scale activity cannot easily be organized by private individuals or organizations. The facts therefore strongly suggest the extensive involvement of foreign intelligence agencies and military personnel in what is still being called a purely internal conflict.

During the past 18 months, the Western media have steadily hammered home the idea that Yugoslavia is in the middle of a civil war brought about by the "aggressor" Serbia's attempt to "conquer" Slovenia and parts of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. While the internal factors of nationalism and ethnic strife are real, they are not sufficient to explain the bloody dynamic. External forces must also be considered. This more complex analysis does not deny that Yugoslavs are killing one another and dying, nor does it dismiss the suffering of the hundreds of thousands who have been affected. Rather it recognizes the clear indications that the secessions of Croatia and Slovenia—which were crucial in the development of the Yugoslav conflict—were prepared with the assistance of foreign powers. These powers also sustained and extended the conflict by sending arms, money, and personnel to Croatia and, more recently, to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

During the 1980s, the West followed a dual policy. First, it pushed Yugoslavia toward a gradual political and economic transformation. The struggle to force changes in Yugoslavia was driven less by tensions between socialism and capitalism than by those between independence and recolonization. In a central Europe dominated by Germany, the policies urged by the West will lead to de-industrialization and dependence as they have already in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland.

The other edge of the West's policy sword was the promotion of separatism in the northern republics. When Yugoslavia balked at "reforms" that had exacerbated economic conditions and ethnic strife, some Western governments turned up the pressure. Germany, strengthened by reunification and expanding its influence throughout Europe, was impatient with Yugoslavia. Its push for quick recognition of Slovenia and Croatia set off a violent chain reaction. The U.S. and other nations faced a *fait accompli* and accepted Germany's demands that the West support German policies. Nonetheless, they saw Germany's strategy as a useful way to ensure that Yugoslavia carry out the political and economic changes they wanted.

After World War II, the Yugoslav people struggled to achieve independence and a decent standard of living. The war in former Yugoslavia has shattered the nation and its many peoples. It is an unnecessary tragedy which can only be stopped if its real causes are understood. •

Weapons," *Guardian* (London), August 28, 1992.

60. "Help from Holy Warriors," *Newsweek*, October 5, 1992, pp. 52-53.

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